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E X T R A C T S

From the First and Second PARTS of the
S P I R I T of P R A Y E R,

And some other Writers :

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D I A L O G U E

B E T W E E N

Academicus, Rusticus, and Theophilus.

Together with a

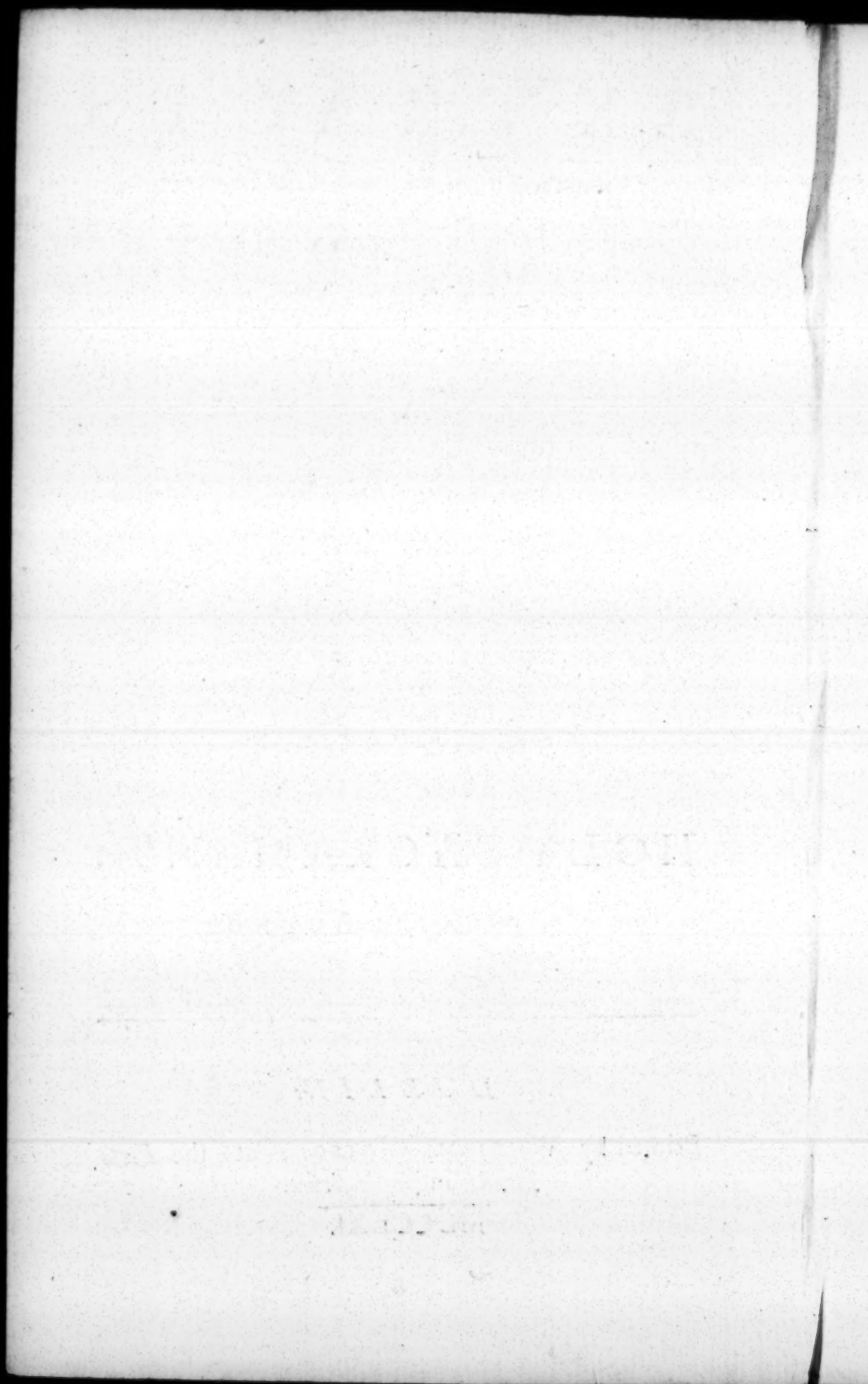
W O R T H Y P R E P A R A T I O N
T O T H E
H O L Y S A C R A M E N T :

From an Antient A U T H O R.

D U B L I N :

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MDCCLXI.



S O M E
T H O U G H T S

On the SUBJECTS of
GRACE and FREE-WILL.

Translated from the *French*.

MAN although he be free, has nothing wherein to Glory excepting God alone, considered in himself he is not the real cause of any good.

A Man for instance who is exposed to the Warmth and Light of the Sun ; who feels its effects, and receives its Influences ; antecedently to his opening his Eyes ; who afterwards opens them, and exposes himself still farther to the warmth

of the Sun; is not nevertheless the maker of his Eyes; nor the source of his own Power of Acting; nor yet of that Warmth which he feels, nor the Light that lightens him; nor of the Connexion which subsists between the opening of his Eyes, and their Illumination. Since if there was not a Light proceeding out of somewhat, distinct from *him*, he might open his Eyes forever, without being thereby enabled to see; the case is exactly the same as to the heat, strength to move, and other advantages which he receives from the Sun: Now, if he would attribute all these Things to himself, and grow vain of them; he would deserve to be deserted, in which case he would discover, that from himself can proceed nothing but Darkness, Ignorance, and Disorder; and he would by this discover, that if his free Co-operation be requisite to admit the Light, and the Heat, yet it is not the Cause of these Things; but only as a Recipient; which receives benefits, in a *Noble, Active*, and willing Manner.

It

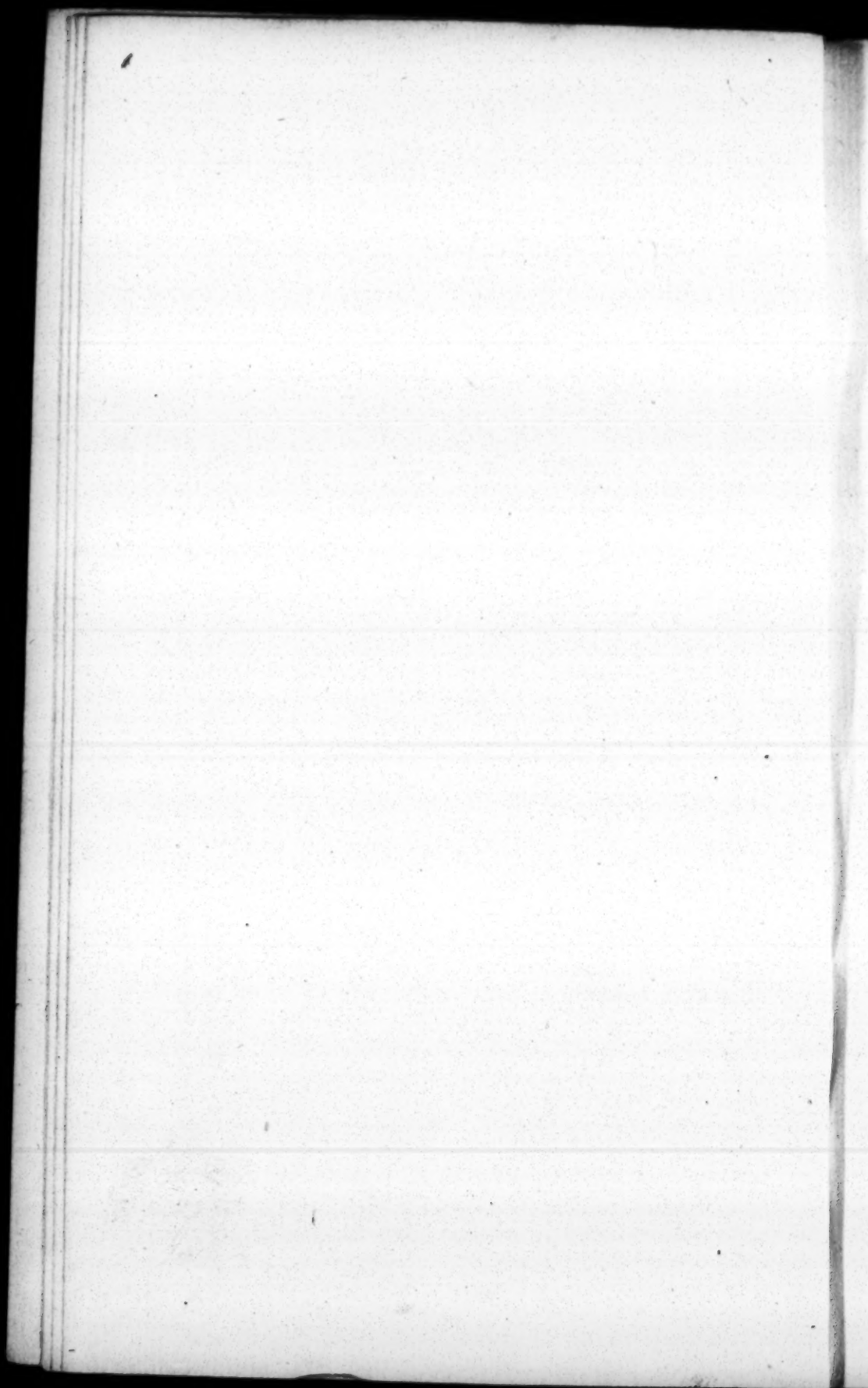
It is thus with the *free Man*, he is not the cause of his Freedom, nor of the Use that he can make of it; nor of the good Motions which he feels, nor of the divine Love with which he is animated, nor of the Truth which enlightens him; nor of the connexion between these Things, and the good Use of his Liberty; which concurs in such a manner, that it is *God* who is the only cause of these Things; and not *Man*; who of himself is nothing, and without *God* is a compound of Darknes, Disorder, and Confusion; but when he unites himself to *God*; he becomes a Subject endued by *God* with Power to admit, and to receive *nobly* and *infinitely* into himself, his eternal Happiness; which *is God*, and his *divine Operations*; and this as far as *Man Wills*, for *God* acts in the same Proportion that *Man Wills*: and he even acts *in the Will*; when *Man* desires he should do so: but without that desire in the Will, *God* doth not act in it, but in the Will *resigned* to *him* he doth every thing,

thing, and such may well Rejoice, and Glorify themselves, but they must Glory in the Liberality, the Power, the Goodness, the Light, and the Grace of God. They may glorify themselves as St. *Paul* did, not I but the Grace of God that is with me, and *in me*, for they have nothing that they did not receive.

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A N

E X T R A C T

From the FIRST PART of the

SPIRIT of PRAYER,

A N D

Some other WRITERS.

THE greatest Part of Mankind, nay of *Christians*, may be said to be asleep; and that particular Way of Life, which takes up each Man's Mind, Thoughts, and Actions, may very well be called his particular Dream. This Degree of Vanity is equally visible in every Form and Order of Life. The Learned and the Ignorant, the Rich and the Poor, are all in the same State of Slumber; only passing away a short Life in a different Kind of Dream. But why so? It is because Man has an eternal Spirit within him, is born into this World, not for the sake of living *here*, not for any Thing this World can *give him*, but only to have Time and Place, to become either an eternal Partaker of a divine Life with God, or to have an hellish Eternity amongst fallen Angels:

B

And

And therefore every Man who has not his *Eye*, his *Heart*, and his *Hands*, continually governed by this two-fold Eternity, may be justly said to be fast asleep, to have no awakened Sensibility of himself. And a Life devoted to the Interests, and Enjoyments of this World, spent and wasted in the Slavery of earthly Desires, may be truly called a Dream, as having all the Shortness, Vanity, and Delusion of a Dream; only with this great Difference, that when a Dream is over, nothing is lost but Fictions and Fancies; but when the Dream of Life is ended *only* by Death, all that Eternity is lost, for which we were brought into Being. Now there is no Misery in this World, nothing that makes either the Life or Death of Man to be full of Calamity, but this Blindness and Insensibility of his State, into which he so willingly, nay obstinately plunges himself. Every Thing that has the Nature of Evil and Distress in it, takes its Rise from hence. Do but suppose a Man to *know himself*; that he comes into this World, on no other Errand, but to rise out of the Vanity of Time, into the Riches of Eternity; do but suppose him to govern his inward Thoughts, and outward Actions by this View of himself, and then to him every Day has lost all its Evil; Prosperity and Adversity have no Difference, because he receives and uses them both in the same Spirit; Life and Death, are equally welcome, because equally Parts of his Way to Eternity, for poor and miserable as this Life is, we have all of us free Access to all that is great and good, and happy, and carry within ourselves a Key to all the Treasure that Heaven has to bestow upon us.

We starve in the Midst of Plenty, groan under Infirmities, with the Remedy in our own Hands; *live* and *die*, without knowing and feeling any thing of the *one only Good*, whilst we have it in our Power, to know and enjoy it in as great a Reality, as we know and feel the Power of this World over us: For Heaven is as near to our Souls, as this World is to our Bodies; and we are *created*, we are *redeemed*, to have our Conversation in it. God the *only Good* of all intelligent

telligent Natures, is not an absent or a distant God, but is more present *in* and *to* our Souls, than our own Bodies; and we are Strangers to Heaven, and without God in the World, for this only Reason, because we are void of that Spirit of Prayer, which alone *can*, and never fails to *unite* us with the *one only Good*, and to open Heaven, and the Kingdom of God within us.

A Root set in the finest Soil, in the best Climate, and blessed with all that Sun and Air, and Rain can do for it, is not in so sure a Way of it's Growth to Perfection, as every Man may be whose Spirit aspires after all that, which God is really and infinitely desirous to give him, for the *Sun* meets not the springing Bud that stretches towards him, with half that Certainty, as God the Source of all Good, communicates himself to the Soul that longs to be united to him; we are all of us by Birth the Offspring of God, more nearly related to him than we are to one another; for in him we *live* and *move*, and *have our Being*. The first Man that was brought forth from God, had the Breath and Spirit of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, breathed into him, and so he became a living Soul. Thus was our first Father born of God, descended from him, and stood in Paradise in the Image and Likeness of God. He was the Image and Likeness of God, not with any Regard to his outward Shape or Form, for no Shape has any Likeness to God; but he was in the Image and the Likeness of God, because the Holy Trinity had breathed their own Nature and Spirit into him. And as the Deity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are always in Heaven, and make Heaven to be every where, so this Spirit breathed by them into Man, brought Heaven into Man along with it; and so Man was in Heaven, as well as on Earth, that is, in Paradise.

But in his fallen State he stands as it were on the Brinks of Hell, liable every Moment to be pushed into it, the deep Ground and absolute Necessity of that new Birth, which the Scripture speaks so much of, is because our Soul as fallen, is quite dead to, and separate from the Kingdom of Heaven, by having lost the Light and Spirit of God in itself; and therefore is, and

must be incapable of entering into Heaven, till by this New Birth, the Soul gets again it's Heavenly Nature.

And if thou hast nothing of this Birth, when thy Body dies, then thou hast only that Life in thee, which the *Devils have*, thou art as far from Heaven, and as incapable of it, as they are; thy Nature is their Nature, and therefore their Habitation must be thine: For nothing can possibly hinder thy Union with fallen Angels, when thou diest, but a *Birth of that* in thy Soul, which the *fallen Angels have lost*.

How pitiable therefore, or rather how hurtful is that *Learning*, which uses all it's Art of Words, to avoid and lose the true Sense of our Saviour's Doctrine concerning the new Birth, which is *necessary* to fallen Man; by holding, that the Passages asserting the new Birth, are only a *figurative*, strong Form of Words concerning *something*, that is not *really* a Birth or Growth of a new Nature, but may, according to the best Rules of criticism, signify a new Relation, as a Scholar may have with his Master, who by a conformity to Forms of Union, or by copying his Ways, and Manners, may, by a Figure of Speech, be said to be born again of him.

Now let it be here observed, that no Passage of Scripture is to be called, or esteemed as a *figurative* Expression, but where the *literal* Meaning cannot be allowed, as implying something that is either *bad* in itself, or *impossible*, or *inconsistent* with some plain and undeniable Doctrines of Scripture. Now that this is not the Case here, is very evident. For who will presume to say, that for the Soul of fallen Man to be born again of God, is in the *literal* Sense of the Words a Thing *bad* in itself, or *impossible*, or inconsistent with any plain and undeniable Doctrines of Scripture? The *Criticks* therefore, who in this Matter, leave the literal Meaning of the Words, and have Recourse to a figurative Sense, are without Excuse, and have nothing they can urge as a Reason for so doing, but their own Skill in Words: But it may be further added as a just Charge against these *Criticks*, that their fixing these Passages to a figurative Meaning, is not only without
any

any Ground, or Reason for so doing, but is also a *bad* Meaning, impossible to be true, and utterly *inconsistent* with the most plain and fundamental Doctrines of Scripture. Now that this is the Case *here*, may in part be seen by the following Instance.

Let it be supposed that a human Body had lost the *Light* and *Air* of this World, and was in a state of Death, because both these were quite extinguished in it; must it not be said, that this human Body cannot see, or enter again into the Life of this World, unless the *Light* and *Air* of this World get a *new Birth* in it (or was restored to it)? Is there here any Occasion, or any Room to form a Doubt, how these Words are to be understood, or any Possibility to mistake the Meaning of them? What a *Philosopher* would he be, who for fear of being called an *Enthusiast*, should here deny the *literal* Meaning of a New Birth, of Light, and Air, and think himself sufficiently justified in flying from it, because in his great Reading, he had seen the Words, *Birth* and *Light*, and *Air* sometimes, and upon some Occasions, used only in a *figurative* Sense? Now this is exactly and to a tittle the Case of the Soul, as fallen, and lying in the same State of Death to the Kingdom of God, 'till a New Birth of the Light and Spirit of God be again brought forth in it. And therefore the *Necessity* of understanding these Words in their *literal* Meaning; the absurdity of flying to a *figurative* Sense of the New Birth, and the *impossibility* of that being the true one, is equally plain, and certain in both these Cases.

Now that the Soul, as fallen, is in this *real State* of Death, is a Doctrine not only plain from the whole Tenour of Scripture, but affirmed in all Systems of Divinity: For all hold and teach, that Man *unredeemed*, must at the Death of his Body have fallen into a State of Misery, like that of fallen Angels: But how can this be true, unless it be true, that the Life of Heaven was extinguished in the Soul, and that Man had really lost that Light, and Spirit of God, which alone can make any Being capable of living in Heaven. All therefore that I have said, concerning the Death of the Soul by

its Fall and its wanting a *real* new Birth, in order to its Salvation, cannot be denied but by giving up this great fundamental Doctrine, namely, *that Man in his fallen State, and unredeemed, must have been eternally lost.* For it cannot be true, that the Fall of Man unredeemed, would have kept him for ever out of Heaven, but because his Fall had absolutely put an End to the Life of Heaven in his Soul.

On the other Hand, it cannot be true, that Jesus Christ is his Redeemer, and does deliver him from his fallen State, unless it be true, that *Jesus Christ* helps him to a new Birth of that Light and Spirit of God, which was extinguished by his Fall: For nothing could possibly be the Redemption or Recovery of Man, but *Regeneration* alone, *for except ye be born of Water and the Spirit, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, &c. &c.* Man's Misery was his having lost the Life and Light of Heaven from his Soul; and therefore nothing in all the universe of Nature; but a new Birth of that which he had lost, could be his Deliverance from his fallen State.

And therefore if Angels after Angels had come down from Heaven to assure him, that God had no Anger at him, he would still have been in the same *helpless State*; nay had he told him, that God had Pity and Compassion towards him, he had yet been unhelped; because in the Nature of the Thing, nothing could be of the least Use to him, but a Renovation of his Nature, or a restoration of what he had lost, *viz.* the Spirit of God, with which he was united, at his first Creation, *which* made him the Image of God.

The Gospel tells us of a certain Man, that fell among Thieves who stripped him and wounded him, and left him half dead; that first a Priest, then a *Lewite* coming that Way both of them avoided the poor Man, by passing on the other Side.

Here it is plain, that this Priest and *Lewite* left the poor Man in the same helpless State in which they found him. Let it now be supposed, that instead of going on the other Side of the Road, they had come up to him, and poured Oil and Wine into his Wounds, only in a *figurative*

figurative Sense of the Words, that is, that they had spoke such Words to him; Words so soft, so oily, and reviving, that in a just Figure of Speech, they might be called a pouring of Wine and Oil into his Wounds. Now had they done this, must it not still be said, that the poor Man's Wounds and Nakedness, were still left in their first *hopeless* State? And all for this plain Reason, because the poor Man was naked and wounded, not in a *figurative* Sense of the Words, but *really* and *truly*; and therefore, could have no Help or Benefit, but from real Oil and Wine, really poured into his Wounds. And for the same plain Reason, the fallen Soul *really* dead to the Kingdom of Heaven, can have no help but a new Birth of the Light and Spirit of God, really brought forth again in it.

When *Adam* lay in his death Wounds to the Kingdom of God, had the highest Arch-angels, or Seraphims come by that Way, they could only have done as the Priest and Levite did, go on the other Side, or if they had come up to him, and done all they could for him, it could only have been such a *Good* or *Relief*, as by a Figure of Speech might be so called.

For as *Adam* had extinguished the Spirit of God in himself, so no one could be the *good Samaritan* to him, or pour that Wine and Oil into his Wounds, which they wanted, but he who was the *Author*, and *Source* of Light and Life to every Being that lives in Heaven; and could again restore these to the Soul, (for Christ is the Light which enlighteneth every Man that cometh into the World.).

One would wonder how many Persons that believe the great Mystery of our Redemption, who adore the Depths of the divine Goodness, in that the Son of God, the second Person in the Trinity, became a Man himself in order to make it possible for Man by a *Birth* from him, our second *Adam*, to enter again into the Kingdom of God, should yet seek to, and contend for, not a *real*, but a *figurative* Sense of a New Birth in Jesus Christ. Is there any Thing more inconsistent than this? Or can any Thing strike more directly at the Heart of the whole Nature of our Redemption?

demption? God became Man, took upon him a Birth from the fallen Nature. But why was this done? Or wherein lies the adorable Depth of this Mystery? How does all this manifest the Infinity of the divine Love towards Man? It is because nothing less than this mysterious Incarnation (which astonishes Angels) could open a *Way* or begin a *Possibility*, for fallen Man to *be born* again, from above, and made again a *Partaker* of the Divine Nature. It was because Man was become so dead to the Kingdom of Heaven, that there was no help for him through all Nature, no Powers, no Abilities of the highest Order of Creatures, could kindle the least Spark of Life in him, or help him to the least glimpse of that heavenly Light which he had lost. Now when all Nature and Creatures stood round about *Adam*, as unable to help him, as he was to help himself, and all of them unable to help him, for this *Reason*, because *that* which he had lost, was the *Life*, and Light of Heaven; how glorious, how adorable is that Mystery, which enables us to say, that when Man lay thus incapable of any Relief from all the *Powers* and *Possibilities* of Nature, that then the Son, the Word of God entered by a Birth into this fallen Nature, that by this mysterious Incarnation, all the fallen Nature might be *born again* of him according to the *Spirit*, in the same *Reality*, as they were born of *Adam*, according to the *Flesh*? Look at this Mystery in this true Light, in this plain Sense of Scripture, and then you must be forced to fall down before it, in Adoration of it. For all that is great and astonishing in the Goodness of God, all that is glorious and happy with regard to Man, is manifestly contained in it.

But tell me I pray, what becomes of all this, what is there left in any Part of this Mystery, if this *new Birth*, for the sake of which God became Man, is not really a New Birth in the Thing itself, is not as the Scripture affirms, a real Birth of the *Son* and *Spirit* of God in the *Soul*, but something or other, this or that, which the Criticks say, may be called a New Birth, by a certain

tain Figure of Speech. Is not *this* to give up all our Redemption at once, and a turning all the Mysteries of our Salvation into meer empty unmeaning Terms of Speech? He that should deny the *Reality* of the Resurrection, upon Pretence that by the Rules of Criticism, it need not signify a real coming out of a State of natural Death, might have as much to say for himself, both from Reason and Scripture, as he that denies the Reality of a new Birth in Christ Jesus: For this New Birth is not a *Part*, but the *Whole* of our Salvation (*for except ye be born again ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*) Every Thing in Religion from the Beginning to the End of Time, is only for the sake of it. Nothing can do us any good, but either as it helps forward our Regeneration, or as it is a true Fruit or Effect of it.

All the glad Tidings of the Gospel, the Institution of Sacraments, all the Benefits of our Saviour, however variously expressed in Scripture, all center in this one *Point*, that he is become our *Light*, our *Life*, our *Resurrection*, our *Holiness*, and *Salvation*; that we are in him new Creatures, *created again* unto Righteousness, born again of him from above, of the Spirit of God. Every Thing in the Gospel, is for the sake of this new Creature, this *new Man in Christ Jesus*, and nothing is regarded without it, *for neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision availeth; but the new Creature*. What Excuse therefore can be made for that Learning, which, robbing us of the true Fruits of the Tree of Life, leaves us nothing to feed upon, but the dry Dust of Words?

I am the Vine, ye are the Branches. Here Christ our second *Adam*, uses this Similitude to teach us, that the New Birth that we are to have from him, is *real* in the most strict and literal Sense of the Words, and that there is the *same Nearness* of Relation betwixt him and his true Disciples, that there is betwixt the Vine and it's Branches, that he does all that *in* us, and *for* us, which the Vine does to its Branches; now the Life of the Vine must be really derived into the Branches, they cannot be Branches, till the Birth of the Vine is

brought forth in them ; and therefore, as sure as the Birth of the Vine must be brought forth in the Branches, so sure is it, that we must be born again of our second *Adam*. And that unless the Life of the Holy *Jesus* be in us by a Birth from him, we are as dead to him, and the Kingdom of God, as the Branch is dead to the Vine, from which it is broken off.

Again, our Blessed Saviour saith, *without me ye can do nothing*. The Question is, when, or how a Man may be said to be without Christ ?

Consider again the Vine and its Branches ; a Branch can then only be said to be without its Vine, when the vegetable Life of the Vine is no longer *in it*. This is the only Sense in which we can be said to be without Christ, when he is no longer *in us*, as a Principle of a heavenly Life, we are then without him, and can do *nothing*, that is nothing that is good or Holy. Christ not in us, is the same thing as Christ not ours, *for except ye be Reprobates Christ dwelleth in ye*. If we are only *so far* with Christ, as to own and receive the History of his Birth, Person and Character, if this is all that we have of him, we are as much *without him*, as much left to our selves, as little helped by him, as those evil Spirits were which cryed out, *We know thee who thou art, the holy One of God*. For those evil Spirits, and all the fallen Angels, are totally without *Christ*, have no Benefit from him, for this one and only Reason, because *Christ* is not *in them* ; therefore every Son of *Adam*, that has not the Son of God in him, is as much *without Christ*, as destitute of all Help from him, as those evil Spirits were, who could only make an outward Confession of him.

It is the Language of Scripture, that Christ *in us* is our Hope of Glory ; that Christ *formed* in us, *living, growing, and raising* his own Life and Spirit in us, is our Salvation. And indeed all this is plain from the Nature of the Thing, for since *Sin* and *Death* are essentially *within* us, the very *Growth* of our Nature, must not our Redemption be equally *inward*, an inward essential Death to this State of our Souls, and an inward Growth of a contrary Life within us ? If *Adam* was

was only an *outward Person*, if his whole Nature was not our Nature, born in us, and derived *from him into us*, it would be Nonsense to say, that his Fall, is our Fall, so in like manner, if Christ, our second *Adam*, was only an *outward Person*, if he entered not as *deeply* into our Nature as the first *Adam* does, if we have not as *really* from him a new inward, spiritual Man, as we have outward Flesh and Blood from *Adam*, what Ground could there be to say, that our Righteousness is from him, as our Sin is from *Adam*.

Let no one here think to charge me with Disregard to the Holy Jesus, who was born of the *Virgin Mary*, or with setting up an *inward* Saviour in Opposition to that outward Christ, whose History is recorded in the Gospel. No, it is with the utmost Fulness of Faith and Assurance, that I ascribe all our Redemption to that blessed and mysterious Person, that was then born of the *Virgin Mary*, and will assert no inward Redemption but what wholly proceeds *from*, and is *effected* by that Life-giving Redeemer, who died on the Cross for our Redemption.

Was I to say, that a *Plant*, or *Vegetable*, must have the Sun *within* it, must have the Life, Light, and Virtue of the Sun, incorporated *in it*, that it has no Benefit from the Sun, till the Sun is thus *inwardly* forming, generating, quickening, and raising up a Life of the Sun's Virtues in it, would this be setting up an *inward* Sun, in opposition to the outward One? Could any Thing be more ridiculous than such a Charge? For is not all that is here said of an inward Sun in the Vegetable, so much said of a Power and Virtue derived from the Sun in the Firmament? So in like Manner, all that is said of an inward Christ, inwardly formed in the Soul, is only so much said of an inward *Life*, brought forth by the Power and *Efficacy* of that blessed Christ, that was born of the *Virgin Mary*.

C H A P. II.

Discovering the true Way of turning to God, of finding the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the Riches of Eternity in our Souls.

THOU hast seen, dear Reader, the Nature and Necessity of Regeneration, be persuaded therefore, fully to believe, and firmly to settle in thy Mind, this most certain Truth, that all our Salvation consists in the *manifestation of the Nature, Life and Spirit of Jesus Christ in our inward New Man.* This is Christian Redemption, for this are we *baptized*, and for this we receive the blessed Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, without this Renovation there is no Christian Redemption; without *this*, nothing delivers from the Guilt and Power of Sin: Every thing without *this*, is *self*, is *Fiction*, is *Propriety*, is own Will, and however coloured, is only thy *old Man* with all his Deeds. Enter therefore with all thy Heart into this Truth, let thine Eye be always upon it, do every Thing in View of it, try every thing by the Truth of it, love nothing but for the sake of it, where ever thou goest, whatever thou doest at home, or abroad, in the Field or at Church, do all in a Desire of Union with Christ, in Imitation of his *Temper* and *Inclinations*, and look upon all as nothing, but that which exercises and encreases the Spirit and Life of Christ in thy Soul.

From Morning to Night keep Jesus in thy Heart, long for nothing, desire nothing, hope for nothing, but to have all that is within thee changed into the Spirit and Temper of the holy Jesus. Let this be thy Christianity and thy Religion, and *this* Spirit of Prayer will make thee use the appointed Means of Grace with Faith, *which* maketh them effectual to Salvation.

This Renovation or new Birth from Christ, thus firmly believed, and continually desired, will do every Thing that thou wantest to have done in thee, will dry up all the Springs of Vice, stop all the Workings of Evil in thy Nature, will bring all that is *Good* into

into thee, and will open all the Gospel within thee, and thou wilt know what it is to be taught of God. This longing Desire of thy Heart to be one with *Christ*, will soon put a Stop to all the Vanity of thy Life, and nothing will be admitted to enter into thy Heart, or proceed from it, but what comes from God and returns to God; thou wilt soon be, as it were tried and bound in the Chains of all holy Affections and Desires, thy *Mouth* will have a *Watch* set upon it, thy Ears would willingly hear nothing that does not tend to God, nor thy Eyes be opened but to see and find Occasions of doing Good. In a Word when this Faith has got both thy *Head*, and thy *Heart*, it will then be with thee, as it was with the Merchant who found a *Pearl of great Price*, it will make thee gladly to *sell all that thou hast*, and buy it. For all that had seized and possessed the Heart of any Man; whatever the *Merchant* of this World had got together, whether of Riches, Power, Honour, Learning, or Reputation, loses all it's Value, is counted but as Dung, and willingly parted with as soon as this glorious *Pearl the new Birth in Christ Jesus* is discovered, and found by him; this therefore may serve as a Touch-stone, whereby every one may try the Truth of his State; if the old Man is still a *Merchant* within thee, treading in all Sorts of worldly Honour, Power, or Learning, if the Wisdom of this World is not Foolishness to thee, if earthly Interests, and sensual Pleasures are still the Desire of thy Heart, and are only covered under a *Form of Godliness*, without the Power of it, thou mayest be assured, that *the Pearl of great Price*, is not yet found by thee, for where *Christ* is; or where his Spirit rises up in the Soul, *there all self*, is *denied*, and obliged to turn out; *there* all carnal Wisdom, Arts of Advancement, with every Pride and Glory of this Life, are as so many *beaten Idols* all willingly renounced, and the Man is not only content; but rejoices to say, *that his Kingdom is not of this World*.

But thou wilt perhaps say, how shall this great Work be effected in me? It might rather be said, since Christ has an infinite Power, and also an infinite Desire to save Mankind;

Mankind ; how can any one miss of this Salvation, but through his own *Unwillingness* to be saved by him ; consider how it was that the *Lame* and *Blind*, the *Lunatick* and *Leper*, the *Publican* and *Sinner*, found Christ to be their Saviour, and to do *all that* for them, which they wanted to be done to them ? It was because they had a *real Desire* of having *that*, which they asked for ; and therefore in true *Faith*, and *Prayer* applied to *Christ*, that his Spirit and Power might enter into them, and heal that which they wanted, and desired to be healed in them.

Every one of these said in *Faith* and *Desire*, *Lord if thou wilt thou canst make me whole*. And the Answer was always *this* ; *According to thy Faith, so be it done unto thee* : This is Christ's Answer *now*, and thus it is done to every one of us at this Day, as our Faith is, so is it done unto us. And here lies the whole Reason of our falling short of the Salvation of Christ, *it is because we have no Desire to it*.

But you will say, do not all Christians desire to have Christ to be their Saviour ? Yes, but here is the Deceit, all would have Christ to be their Saviour in the *next World*, and to help them into Heaven when they die, by his Power, and Merits with God : But this is not willing Christ to be thy Saviour ; for his Salvation, if it is had, it must be had *in this World*, if he saves thee, it must be done *in this Life*, by changing and altering all that is within thee, by helping thee to a new *Heart*, as he helped the Blind to see, and the Lame to walk, and the Dumb to speak. For to have Salvation from *Christ*, is to be made like unto him ; it is to have his Humility and Meekness ; his Mortification and Self-denial, his Renunciation of the Spirit, Wisdom, and Honours of this World ; his Love of God ; his Desire of doing God's Will, and seeking only *his Honour*, to have these Tempers formed and begotten in thy Heart, is to have Salvation from *Christ* ; but if thou *willest not* to have these Tempers brought forth in thee, if thy Faith and Desire

Desire does not seek and cry to *Christ* for them in the *same Reality*, as the *Lame* asked to walk, and the *Blind* to see, then thou must be said to be unwilling to have *Christ* to be thy Saviour.

Again, consider, how was it that the carnal *Jew*, the deep-read *Scribe*, the learned *Rabbi*, the religious *Pharisee*, not only did not receive, but crucified their Saviour, it was because they *willed* and desired no such Saviour as he was, no such *inward Salvation* as he offered to them. They desired no Change of their own natural Tempers, no Deliverance from the Love of themselves, and the enjoyments of their Passions; they liked their State, the Gratifications of their old Man, their long Robes, their broad Phylacteries and Greetings in the Markets; they wanted not to have their Pride and Self-love dethroned, their Covetousness, and Sensuality to be subdued, by a new Nature from Heaven derived into them; their only Desire was the Success of *Judaism* to have an *outward* Saviour; a temporal Prince that should establish their *Law* and Ceremonies over all the Earth. And therefore, they crucified their dear Redeemer, and would have none of his Salvation, because it all consisted in a Change of their Nature, in a *new Birth*, from above, and a Kingdom of Heaven to be opened *within* them by the Spirit of God.

Oh! *Christendom*, look not only at the old *Jews*, but see thy self in this Glass; for at this Day, a *Christ within* us; an inward Saviour, raising a Birth of his own Nature, Life and Spirit within us, is rejected as gross Enthusiasm, the learned *Rabbies* take Counsel against it, the Propagation of Popery; the Propagation of Protestantism is the Salvation which People are chiefly concerned about.

But to return, it is manifest that no one can fail of the Benefit of *Christ's* Salvation, but through an unwillingness to have it, and from the same Spirit and Temper, which made the *Jews* unwilling to receive it. But if thou wouldst still farther know, how this

this great Work is to be effected in thee, then let this joyful Truth be told thee, that this great Work is *already* begun in every one of us ; for Christ who *is to be formed in thee*, who is to be the Saviour and new Life of thy Soul, who is to raise thee out of the Darkness of Death into the Light of Life, and give thee Power to become a Son of God, is already *within* thee, *living calling, knocking*, at the *Door* of thy *Heart*, and wanting nothing but thy own *Faith* and *good Will* to have as real a Form in thee as he had in *St. Paul*, when he said, *it is not I that live but Christ who liveth in me*, and that ye may not suppose that this Indwelling of Christ was peculiar to him, because he was an inspired Apostle ; he says to all the Church, *my little children of whom I labour until Christ be formed in you*. When our blessed Lord conversed with the Woman at *Jacob's Well*, he said unto her, *if thou knewest the Gift of God, and who it is, that talketh with thee, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living Water*. How happy (may any one well say) was this Woman of *Samaria* to stand so near this Gift of God, from whom she might have had living Water, had she but vouchsafed to have asked for it ? But dear Christian, this Happiness is thine, for this Holy Jesus, the Gift of God, first given unto *Adam*, is the Gift of God to thee, art thou wandered from him, as far as the prodigal Son from his Father's House, yet he is still with thee, and if thou wilt turn to him, and ask of him, he has living Waters for thee.

Poor Sinner ! consider the Treasure thou hast within thee, the Saviour of the World, the eternal Word of God lies hid in thee, as a Spark of Divine Nature, for the Word is near thee, even in thy Heart ; it is this Word which is to overcome Sin and Death and Hell within thee, and new create thee, by restoring the Life of Heaven again into thy Soul. Turn to thy Heart, and thy Heart will find it's Saviour, it's God within itself ; for thou art his *Tabernacle*, the Temple of the Holy Ghost ; thou hearest, see'st and feelest nothing of God, because thou only seekest for him abroad with thy outward Eyes, thou seekest for him in Books, in
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Controversies and outward Exercises; but in these thou wilt not find him, until thou hast *first* found him in thy Heart, seek for him in thy *Heart*, and thou wilt never seek in vain, for there he *dwelleth*, (for except ye be Reprobates Christ dwelleth in you;) *there* is the Seat of his Holy Spirit, and this turning to the Spirit of God within thee, is thy true turning unto God, this is Repentance, nothing availeth without *this*, which is the true Mark of the new Creature, and without it we draw near to God with our Lips, when our Hearts are far from him, for though God be every where present, yet he is only present to thee in thy Soul. Thy natural Senses cannot possess God, or unite thee to him, nay thy inward Faculties of *Understanding*, *Will* and *Memory*, can only *reach* after God, but cannot unite thy Soul to God, but the Place of his Habitation in thee, is thy *Heart*, or *Will*. When the holy Trinity brought forth its own living Image in the first created Man, he bore in himself a living Representation of Father, Son, and holy Ghost; and this was his dwelling in God, and God in him; this was the Kingdom of God *within him*: But the Day that *Adam* did eat of the forbidden earthly Tree, in that Day he absolutely died to this Kingdom of God *within him*, as God had positively foretold him; in the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die; his Soul having lost its God, was shut up in Death and Darkness, and this was the Fall of Man, a *Death* or Insensibility to God, and a *Life* or Sensibility to the Good and Evil of this World, which is all included in Self-will, in Opposition unto God's Will, this was the Fall of Man. But from the Moment that the God of Mercy promised to *Adam* the Bruiser of the Serpent, from that Moment all the Riches and Treasure of the divine Nature came again into Man, as a *Seed* of Salvation sown into the Soul; and only lieth hidden there, in Man, till he desires to rise from his fallen State.

Awake then, thou that sleepest, and Christ (who is exposed to thy Soul) shall give thee Light; begin to search and dig in thine own Field for this Pearl of *Eternity*, that lieth hidden in it, it cannot cost thee too much, nor canst thou buy it too dear, for it is *all*, and
when

when thou hast found it, thou wilt know, that all which thou hast sold, or given away for it, is as meer Nothing, or as a Bubble upon the Water.

But if thou turnest from this heavenly Pearl, or tramplest it under thy Feet, for the Sake of being Rich, or Great, either in Church or State, if Death finds thee in this *Success*, thou canst not then say, that though the Pearl is lost, yet *something* has been gained instead of it. For in that parting Moment the *Things* and the *Sounds* of this World, will be exactly alike; to have *had* an *Estate*, or only to have *heard* of it, to have lived at *Lambeth* twenty Years, or only to have twenty times *passed* by the Palace, will be the *same Good* or the *same Nothing* to thee.

But I will shew thee a little more distinctly, what this *Pearl of Eternity* is. *First*, it is the Spirit of God within thee, which has hitherto done thee but little Good, because all the Desire of thy Heart has been after the Spirit of this World, for he who is a Friend to this World, is at Enmity with God, and we cannot serve two Masters, God and Mammon; thy Reason, and Senses, thy Heart and Passions, have turned all their Attention to the poor Concerns of this Life, and therefore, thou art a Stranger to this Principle of Heaven, this Riches of Eternity within thee. For as God *is* not, *cannot* be truly found by any Worshipppers, but those who worship him in *Spirit* and in *Truth*: So this Light and Spirit, though always within us, *is not*, *cannot* be found, felt, or enjoyed, but by those, whose Spirit is turned to it.

When Man first came into Being, and stood before God as his own Image and Likeness, then this *Spirit* of God was as *natural* to him, as truly the Light of his Nature as the *Light* and *Air* of this World is natural to the Creatures that have their Birth in it, but when Man did eat of the earthly Tree, and by that Choice turn'd his Will from God, this Light and Spirit of Heaven, was no more *natural* to him, but instead thereof he was left solely to the Light and Spirit of this World. And this is that Death which God told *Adam*, he should surely die, in the Day that he should eat of the forbidden Tree.

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But the Goodness of God would not leave Man in this Condition; a Redemption from it was immediately granted; and the Bruiser of the Serpent brought the Light and Spirit of Heaven *once more* into the human Nature.

Not as it was in its first State, when Man was in Paradise, but as a Treasure hidden in our Souls, which should discover, and open itself by Degrees, in such Proportion, as the *Faith* and Desires of our Hearts were turned to it; this Light and Spirit of God, thus freely restored again to the Soul, and lying in it as a secret Source of Heaven, is called *Grace*, *free Grace*, or the *supernatural* Gift, or Power of God in the Soul, because it was something, that the natural Powers of the Soul could no more obtain. Hence it is, that in the greatest Truth, and highest Reality, every stirring of the Soul, every tendency of the Heart towards God and Goodness, is *justly* and *necessarily* ascribed to the holy Spirit, or the Grace of God; it is because this *first Seed* of Life, which is sown into the Soul, as the Gift or Grace of God to fallen Man, is itself the *Light* and *Spirit* of God, and therefore every stirring, or *opening* of this Seed of Life, every awakened Thought or Desire that arises from *it*, must be called the *moving*, or the quickening of the Spirit of God; and therefore that new Man which arises from it, must of all Necessity be said to be *solely* the Work and Operation of God.

Hence also we have an easy and plain Declaration of the true Meaning, solid Sense, and certain Truth of all those Scriptures, which speak of the *Inspiration* of God, the Operation of the *Holy Spirit*, the Power of the *Divine Light*, as the *necessary* Agents in the Renewal and Sanctification of our Souls. Hence also, it is, that all Men are exhorted not to *quench*, or *resist*, or grieve the Spirit, that is this *Seed of the Spirit*, and *Light* of God that is in all Men, as the only Source of Good. Again, the Flesh lusteth against the *Spirit*, and the Spirit against the Flesh. By the Flesh and it's Lustings, are meant the mere *human Nature*, or the *natural Man*, as he is by the Fall; by the *Spirit* is meant the Bruiser of the Serpent; that Seed of the Spirit of God, which lieth as a Treas-
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sure hid in the Soul, in order to bring forth the Life that was lost in *Adam*. When this Seed of the Spirit is not *resisted*, *grieved* and *quenched*, but its *Inspirations* and *Motions* suffered to grow and increase in us, to unite with God, and get Power over all the Lusts of the *Flesh*, then we are new Creatures, for the Nature, Spirit and Tempers of *Jesus Christ* are opened in our Souls, the Kingdom of God is come, and is found within us; then the Works of the *Flesh*, Adultery, Fornication, Murders, Lying, Hatred, Envy, Wrath, Pride, Foolishness, worldly Wisdom, carnal Prudence, false Religion, hypocritical Holiness, and Serpentine subtlety, have not set up their Kingdom within us. See here in short the State of Man as redeemed. He has a Spark of the *Light* and Spirit of God, as a *supernatural Gift* of God, given into his Soul, to bring forth by Degrees a new Nature, or that Life which was lost in Paradise. This holy Spark of the divine Nature within him, makes him look at the *Rock from whence he is hewn*, with a natural strong and almost infinite Tendency or reaching after that eternal Light and Spirit of God, from whence it came forth, it came from God, it came out of God, (for God breathed into Man the Breath of Life) it partaketh of the divine Nature, and therefore it is always in a State of Tendency and Return to God. And all this is called the Breathing, Moving or Quickning of the Holy Spirit within us, which are so many Operations of this Spark of Life, tending towards God.

On the other Hand, the Deity as considered in itself, and *without* the Soul of Man, has an infinite and unchangeable Tendency of Love and Desire towards the Soul of Man, to unite and communicate its own Riches and Glories to it, just as the Spirit of the *Air without* Man, unites and communicates its Riches and Virtues to the Spirit of the Air, that is within Man. This Love or Desire of God towards the Soul of Man is so great, that he gave his only begotten Son, the Brightness of his Glory, to take the human Nature upon him in its fallen State, that by this mysterious Union of *God and Man*, all the Enemies of the Soul of Man, might be overcome, and every human
Creature

Creature might have a Power of being born again, according to that Image of God, in which he was first created, *for except ye be born again ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* The Gospel is the History of the Love of God to Man. For God so loved the World that he laid down his Life for it.

Inwardly Man hath a Seed of the Divine Life given into his Soul, (which is called preventing Grace) this Seed hath all the Riches of Eternity in it, and is that small Grain of Mustard-seed which groweth unto a great Tree, and is the Kingdom of Heaven within us; this Seed is always wanting to renew us. That we may be alive in God, outwardly we have *Jesus Christ*, who as a Son of Righteousness, is always casting forth his enlivening Beams on this inward Seed to kindle and encrease its Growth, doing that to this Seed of Heaven in Man, which the Sun in the Firmament is always doing to the vegetable Seeds in the Earth. Christ hath likewise appointed in his tender Love to us, *outward Means of Grace*, such as Baptism, (which in Scripture is called the Laver of Regeneration,) the laying on of Hands (*which St. Paul says*) is one of the Foundations of Christianity, and the Lord's Supper, of which Christ sayeth, that except ye eat of the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you, let none then be deceived through the Pretence of a refined Spirituality so far as to neglect these outward Means of Grace, which were instituted by Christ, who *himself* was baptized in order to fulfill all Righteousness. And who brake *Bread*, and poured out *Wine*, which he gave to his Disciples when he instituted his last Supper, and said, *drink ye all of this.*

St. Peter likewise, speaking of those who were baptized by the Spirit, saith: who can forbid *Water* that *these* should be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we.

Thus the Apostles and noble Army of Martyrs were all baptized with *Water*, as well as with the Spirit, and all received the consecrated Elements of Bread and Wine, may all Men imitate them, in keeping all God's *Commandments*, and Ordinances blamelessly, for although the Means of Grace are not to be *rested* in, they are
never

never to be dispensed with till Time shall be no more: for Truth hath said, that Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but his Words shall not pass away.

St. Paul calls Baptism and laying on of Hands, &c. &c. the Foundations of *Christianity*, and desireth, intreateth *Timothy* not to be always laying these Foundations, but to go on to Perfection, which he saith by God's Help he will do, and we will imitate him by resuming our Discourse. Our Lord saith, that to know God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent is everlasting Life, because it is impossible to know, and not desire them, and it is as impossible to desire and not enjoy them. Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you; for Jesus Christ as a Sun of Righteousness is always casting forth his enlivening Beams, on the inward Seed (*which* is called preventing Grace) doing that to this Seed of Heaven in Man, which the Sun in the Firmament is always doing to the vegetable Seeds in the Earth.

Consider the Matter in the following Similitude; a Grain of Wheat in the Air and Light of this World inclosed, or incorporated in it: This is the Mystery of its Life, this is its Power of Growing, by this it has a strong continual Tendency of uniting again with that Ocean of Light and Air, from whence it came forth, and so it helps to kindle its own vegetable Life.

On the other Hand, that great Ocean of Light and Air, having its own *Offspring* hidden in the Heart of the Grain, has a perpetual strong Tendency to unite and communicate with it again. From this Desire of Union on *both Sides*, the vegetable Life arises, and all the Virtues and Powers contained in it.

But here let it be observed, that this Desire on both Sides cannot have its Effect, till the *Husk* and gross Part of the Grain falls into a State of Corruption and Death, till this begins, the Mystery of Life hidden in it, cannot come forth. The Application here may be left to the Reader. I shall only observe, that we may here see the true Ground and absolute Necessity of that dying to our *selves*, and to the *World*, to which our
blessed

bleſſed Lord ſo conſtantly calls all his Followers; an univerſal Self-denial, a perpetual Mortification of the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not a Thing impoſed upon us by the mere Will of God, is not required as a *Puniſhment*, is not an Invention of dull and monkish Spirits, but has its *Ground* and *Reason* in the Nature of the Thing, and is as abſolutely neceſſary to make Way for the new Man in Chriſt, as the Death of the Huſk and groſs Part of the Grain is neceſſary to make Way for its vegetable Life.

But ſecondly, this Pearl of Eternity is the Wiſdom and Love of God within thee, in this Pearl of thy Serpent-bruiſer, all the holy Nature, Spirit, Temper, and Inclinations of Chriſt lie as in a Seed in thy Soul, and divine Wiſdom and heavenly Love will grow up in thee, if thou giveſt but true Attention to God preſent in thy Soul; for whoſoever abideth in him ſinneth not, *John* iii. 6. and Chriſt tells us, that if a Man's Ways pleaſe him, his Father, and He, will come unto him, and make their Abode with him, therefore it is not *Enthuſiaſm*, ſo to live, as that we may become the Temples of God, for ye are the Tabernacles of the Holy Ghoſt. But on the other Hand, there is hidden alſo in the Depth of thy Nature, the Root or Poſſibility of all the helliſh Nature, Spirit and Tempers of the fallen Angels. For Heaven and Hell have each of them their *Foundation* within us, they come not into us from *without*, but ſpring up in us, according as our Will and Heart is turned, either to the Light of God, or the Kingdom of Darkneſs. But when this Life, which is in the Miſt of theſe two Extremities, is at an end, either an *Angel* or a *Devil* will be found to have a Birth in us.

Thou needeſt not therefore run here, or there, ſaying, *who ſhall aſcend into Heaven, that is, to bring down Chriſt from above?* or who ſhall deſcend into the Deep, to bring up Chriſt from the Dead; for behold the Word is in thy Heart, it is *there* as a Bruifer of thy Serpent, as a Light unto thy Feet, and a Lanthorn unto thy Paths, it is an Unction from the holy One, *John* i. 20. it is an holy Oil, to ſoften and overcome the
wrathful

wrathful fiery Properties of thy Nature, it is the Oil of the wise Virgins Lamps, that will change them into the humble Meekness of Light, and Love; it is as a *speaking* Word of God in thy Soul; and as soon as thou art ready to *bear*, this eternal speaking Word, will speak Wisdom and Love in thy inward Parts, and Christ will be *formed* with all his holy Nature, Spirit and Tempers, *within thee*, for this St. *Paul* laboured, that *Christ* might be formed in his little Children; in this State was St. *Paul*, when he said, that *he* lived not, but Christ lived in him. Hence it was that so many eminent Spirits, Partakers of a divine Life, have appeared in so many Parts of the *Heathen* World. Glorious Names, Sons of Wisdom, that shone as Lights hung out by God, in the Midst of idolatrous Darkness. These were the Apostles of a *Christ* within, that were awakened by the inward *Bruiser* of the Serpent, to call Mankind from the blind Pursuits of Flesh and Blood, to know *themselves*, the Dignity of their Nature, the Immortality of their Souls, and the Necessity of Virtue to avoid eternal Shame and Misery. These though they had not the *Law*, or written Gospel to urge upon their Hearers, yet having turned to God, they found, and preached the Gospel, that was written in their Hearts. Hence one of them could say this divine Truth, viz. *Such only are Priests and Prophets, who have God in themselves.* Hence also it is that in the Christian Church, there have been in all Ages, amongst the most illiterate, both Men and Women, who have attained to a deep Understanding of the Mysteries of the Wisdom and Love of God in *Christ Jesus*. And what Wonder? since it is not Art or Science, or Skill in Grammar or Logic, but the opening of the divine Life in the Soul, that can give true Understanding of the Things of God. This Life of God in the Soul, which for its Smallness at first, and Capacity for great Growth, is by our Lord compared to a Grain of Mustard-seed, may be, and too generally is, suppressed, and kept under, either by worldly Cares, or Pleasures, by vain Learning, Sensuality, or Ambition. And all this while, whatever Church or Profession any Man is of, he is a mere
natural

natural Man *unenlightened* by the Spirit of God, because this Seed of Heaven is choaked, and not suffered to grow up in him ; and therefore, his Religion is no more from Heaven, than his *fine Breeding*, his Cares have no more Goodness in them, than his Pleasures ; his Love is worth no more than his Hatred, his Zeal for *this*, or *against that* Form of Religion, has only the Nature of any other worldly Contention in it ; and thus it is, and must be with every mere natural Man, whatever Appearances he may put on, he may, if he pleases, know himself to be the Slave and Machine of his own corrupt Tempers and Inclinations ; to be enlightened, inspired, quickened, and animated by Self-love, Self-esteem, and Self-seeking, which is the only Life and Spirit of the mere natural Man, whether he be *Heathen, Jew, or Christian*.

On the other Hand, where this Seed of Heaven is suffered to take Root, to get Life and Breath in the Soul, whether it be in Man or Woman, young or old, there this new Creature is justly said to be *inspired, enlightened*, and moved by the Spirit of God, because his Life is a Birth from above, of the Light and Spirit of God ; and therefore all that is in him, hath the Nature, Spirit, and Tempers of Heaven in it. As this Life grows up in any Man, so there grows up a true and real Knowledge of the whole Mystery of godliness in himself. All that the Gospel teaches of Sin and Grace, of Life and Death, of Heaven and Hell, of the new and old Man, of the Light and Spirit of God, are Things not got by *Hearsay*, but inwardly known, felt and experienced in the growth of his own new born Life. He has then an *Uction* from above, which teacheth him all Things, a Spirit that knoweth *what it ought to pray for*, a Spirit that prays without ceasing, that is risen with *Christ* from the dead, and has all its Conversation in Heaven, a Spirit that travaileth and groaneth with the whole Creation, to be delivered from Vanity and have it's glorious Liberty in that God, from whom it came forth.

Again, this Pearl of the wise Merchant-man is the *Church or Temple of God* within thee, the consecrated

Place of divine Worship, where thou canst at all Times worship God in Spirit and in Truth. In Spirit, because thy Spirit is that alone in thee, which can unite and cleave unto God, and receive the Workings of his divine Spirit upon thee, in Truth, because this *Adoration* in Spirit, is that *Truth* and *Reality* of which all outward *Forms* and *Rites*, though instituted by God, are only the *Figure* for a Time, but this Worship is eternal. Accustom thy self to the holy Service of this inward Temple. In the Midst of it, is the Fountain of living Water, of which thou mayst drink, and live for ever. There the Supper of the Lamb is kept; and known in real Experience, in a living Sensibility of the Work of God in the Soul, when once thou art well grounded in this inward *Worship*, thou wilt have learned to live unto God above *Time* and *Place*, and every Day will be Sunday to thee, for when God has all that he should have of thy Heart, when renouncing the Will, Judgment, Tempers, and Inclinations of *thy old Man*, thou art wholly given up to the Obedience of the Spirit of God to Will only, as he Wills, and love as he loves, and to be wise only in his Wisdom, then it is that every Thing thou doest is a Song of Praise, and the common Business of thy Life is a conforming to his *Will on Earth*, as Angels do in Heaven.

The Pearl of Eternity, which is to be obtained by God's appointed Means, is the *Peace* and *Joy* of God within thee, but can only be found in the manifestation of the Life and Power of *Jesus Christ* in thy Soul. But *Christ* cannot be thy Power and thy Life, till in Obedience to his Call, thou deniest thy self, takest up thy daily Cross, and followest him, in the Regeneration. This is peremptory, it admits of no Reserve, or *Evasion*, it is the only Way to Christ and eternal Life; but be where thou wilt, either *here* or at *Rome*, or *Geneva*, if *self* is undenied, if thou livest to thine *own Will*, to the Pleasures of thy natural Lust and Appetites, Senses and Passions, and in conformity to the vain Customs, and Spirit of this World, thou art *dead whilst thou livest*, the Seed of the Woman is crucified within thee, Christ can profit thee nothing, thou art a Stranger
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to all that is holy and heavenly within thee, and utterly incapable of finding the *Peace* and *Joy* of God in thy Soul, for if thou *givest* not *thy Heart* to God, thou wilt be *poor*, and blind, and naked, and empty, and thou wilt live a miserable Life in the vanity of Time ; whilst all the Riches of Eternity, the Light and Spirit, the Wisdom and Love, the Peace and Joy of God are within thee, and thus it will always be with thee, there is no Remedy, go where thou wilt, do what thou wilt, all is shut up, there is no open Door of Salvation, no awakening out of the Sleep of Sin, no Deliverance from the Power of thy corrupt Nature, no overcoming of the World, no Revelation of *Jesus Christ*, no Joy of the new Birth from above, till dying to thy *self* and the *World*, thou turnest to the Light, and Spirit, and Power of God in thy Soul. All is fruitless and insignificant, all the Means of thy Redemption are at a stand, all outward Forms are but a dead Formality, till his Fountain, of living Water is found within thee ; and when it is thou wilt not omit the appointed Means of growing in Grace, but will rejoice with King *David*, when they say unto thee, we will go unto the House of the Lord, and when thou art there, thou wilt not incur the guilt of drawing nigh to God with thy Lips, when thy Heart is far from him, but thou wilt glorifie him before Men, thy Light will shine in a Candlestick, and at the same Time, thou wilt worship God in Spirit and in Truth, for he seeks such, and *only such* to worship him.

But thou wilt perhaps say, how shall I discover this Riches of Eternity, this Light and Spirit, and Wisdom, and Peace of God, treasured up within me ?

* Thy *first Thought* of Repentance, or Desire of turning to God, is thy first Discovery of the Spirit of God within thee, though thou knowest it not ; it is the Bruiser of thy Serpent's Head, thy dear *Immanuel*, who is beginning to preach *within* thee, that same which he first preached in Publick, saying, *Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*. When therefore but the smallest Instinct or Desire of thy Heart calleth thee towards God, and a Newness of Life, give it *Time* and *Leave* to speak ; and take care thou refuse not him that speaketh.

For it is not an Angel from Heaven that speaketh to thee, but it is the eternal *speaking Word* of God in thy Heart, that Word which at first created thee, which is thus beginning to create thee a *second Time* unto Righteousness ; that thou mayst be a *new Creature*, that a new Man may be formed again in thee, in the Image and Likeness of God. But above all Things, beware of taking this *Desire* of Repentance, to be the Effect of thy own natural *Sense* and *Reason*, for in so doing thou loosest the *Key* of all the heavenly Treasure that is in thee, thou shuttest the Door against God, turnest away from him, and thy Repentance (if thou hast any) will be only a vain unprofitable Work of thy own Hands, that will do thee no more Good than a Well that is without Water. But if thou takest this awakened Desire of turning to God, to be, as in truth it is, the coming of Christ into thy Soul, the *Working Redeeming Power* of the Spirit of God within thee, if thou dost reverence and adhere to it as such, this Faith *will save thee, will make thee whole* ; and this is not *Enthusiasm* ; for except ye be Reprobates Christ dwelleth in you ; of ourselves we cannot think a good Thought, and Christ in us is our *Hope of Glory*, that Mystery which had been kept secret for Ages, but is now revealed. And by thus believing in *Christ*, though thou wert dead, yet shall thou live ; all dependeth upon thy right Submission and Obedience to this speaking of God in thy Soul. Conscience is his Voice, attend to, and obey it. Quench not the Spirit. Grieve not the Spirit, with evil Communications ; listen not to the Suggestions of thy own Reason, run not on in thy own Will, but be retired and humbly attentive to him who speaketh ; as *David* was, who said, I will listen to what the Lord will say to me ; he speaks by inclining the Heart to Good, be humbly attentive to this Voice of Conscience then within thee. Open thy Heart, thy Eyes, and Ears to all its Impressions ; let it enlighten, teach, frighten, torment, judge, and condemn thee, as it pleaseth, turn not away from it, hear all it saith, seek for no Relief out of it, consult not with Flesh and Blood, but with a Heart full of Faith and Resignation to God,
 pray

pray only this Prayer, that God's Kingdom may come, and his Will be done in thy Soul. Stand faithfully in this State of Preparation, thus given up to the Spirit of God, and then the Work of thy Repentance will be wrought in God, and thou wilt soon find, that he that is *in thee*, is much greater, than all that are against thee.

But that thou mayst do all this the better, and be more firmly assured, that this Resignation to, and Dependence upon the working of God's Spirit within thee, is right and sound, consider that those only are the Sons of God, who are led by his Spirit. I shall lay before thee two great, and infallible, and fundamental Truths, which will be as a Rock for thy Faith to stand upon.

First, that through all the whole Nature of Things, nothing can *do*, or *be* a real Good to thy Soul, but the Operation of God upon it.

Secondly, that all the Dispensations of God to Mankind, from the Fall of *Adam*, to the preaching of the Gospel, were only for this one End, to fit, prepare, and dispose the Soul for the *Operation* of the Spirit of God upon it, (for this Purpose were Baptism, laying on of Hands, and the Lord's Supper instituted, as well as a Priesthood ordained to administer them.)

These two great Truths well and deeply apprehended, put the Soul into its right State, in a continual Dependence upon God.

In a Readiness to receive all Good from him, and will be a continual Source of Light in thy Mind. They will keep thee safe from all Errors, and false Zeal in Things and Forms of Religion, from a Sectarian Spirit, from Bigotry, and Superstition, they will teach thee the true Difference between the *Means* and *End* of Religion, and the Regard thou shewest to the Shell will only be in order to preserve the Kernel; and as God hath fenced in a neat Vine-yard and placed thee in it, thou wilt faithfully keep up this Fence in Order to preserve the Vine from the many-headed Monster of *Superstition*, *Fanaticism*, and *Infidelity*, a return of the Heart to God is the Religion of the End, he says, *My Son give me thy Heart*. But Man by his Fall had

broke off from God, and therefore the Life and Operation of God was no more in him; he was fallen from a Life in God, into a Life of Self, into an Animal Life of Self-love, Self-esteem, and Self-seeking, in the poor perishing Enjoyments of this World. This was the natural State of Man by the Fall. He was an Apostate from God, and his natural Life was all Idolatry, where Self was the great Idol, that was worshipped instead of God. See here the whole Truth; *in short*, all Sin, Death, Damnation and Hell, is nothing else but the Consequences of this Kingdom of Self, or the various Operations of *Self-love*, *Self-esteem*, and *Self-seeking*; which separate the Soul from God, and end in eternal Death and Hell.

On the other Hand, all that is Grace, Redemption, Salvation, Sanctification, spiritual Life, and the new Birth; is nothing else but so much of the Life and Operation of God found again in the Soul, it is Man returned to his first State.

The Beginning again of the Life of God in the Soul which was first made, when the Mercy of God, inspoke into Adam a *Seed* of the divine Life, which should bruise the Head of the Serpent, which had wrought itself into the human Nature. Here the Kingdom of God was again within us, though only as a *Seed*, yet small as it was, it was still a Degree of the divine Life, which if rightly *cultivated*, would overcome all the Evil that was in us, and make of every fallen Man, a new born Son of God.

All the Sacrifices and Institutions of the ancient Patriarchs, the *Law* of *Moses*, with all its Types and Rites, and Ceremonies, had this only End; they were the Methods of divine Wisdom for a Time, to keep the Hearts of Men from the Wanderings of Idolatry in a State of *holy Expectation* upon God, they were to keep the *first Seeds* of Life in a State of Growth, and make way for the farther Operation of God upon the Soul; or as the Apostle speaks, to be as a School-master to bring them unto Christ, that is, till the Birth, the Death, the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, should conquer Death, and Hell, open a new Dispen-

Dispensation of God, and baptize Mankind afresh with the Holy Ghost, and Fire of Heaven ; then, that is on the Day of Pentecost, a new Dispensation of God came forth ; which on God's Part, was the Operation of the Holy Spirit in Gifts and Graces upon the whole Church ; and on Man's Part, it was the Adoration of God in *Spirit* and in Truth. Thus all that was done by God, from the Bruiser of the Serpent given to *Adam*, to *Christ's* sitting down on the right Hand of God, was all for this End, to remove all that stood between God and Man, and to make Way for the immediate and continual Operation of God upon the Soul. And that those who were baptized with *Water*, and the Holy Spirit, and born again from above, should absolutely renounce *Self*, and wholly give up their Souls to the Operation of God's Spirit, to know, to love, to will, to pray, to worship, to preach, to exhort, to use all the Faculties of their Minds, and all the outward Things of this World, as enlightened, inspired, moved and guided by the Holy Ghost ; who by this last Dispensation of God, was given to be a Comforter, a Teacher, and Guide to the Church, and who should abide with it for ever.

This is Christianity, a spiritual and a visible Society, spiritual, not because it has no worldly Concerns, for it hath as there is a visible Church, but because all its Members, as such, are born of the Spirit, kept alive, animated and governed by the Spirit of God. It is constantly called by our Lord the Kingdom of God, or Heaven, because all it's *Ministry* and *Service*, all that is done in it, is done in Obedience and Subjection to *that Spirit*, by which Angels live, and are governed in Heaven. Hence our blessed Lord taught his Disciples to pray, that this Kingdom might come, that God's Will might be done in Earth as it is in Heaven. The short is this : The Kingdom of Self is the Fall of Man, or the great Apostacy from the Life of God in the Soul, and every one wherever he be, that liveth unto *Self*, is still under the *Fall*, and great Apostacy from God.

The Kingdom of *Christ*, is the Spirit and Power of God dwelling and manifesting itself in the Birth of a new Creature, and no one is a Member of this Kingdom, but so far as a true Birth of the Spirit is brought forth in him. These two Kingdoms take in all Mankind, he that is not of one is certainly in the other. Dying to one is living to the other.

Hence we may gather these following Truths : First, here is shewn the true Ground and Reason of what was said above, namely, that when the Call of God to Repentance first ariseth in thy Soul, thou art to be Retired, Silent, Passive, and humbly attentive to this new risen Light, within thee, by wholly stopping or disregarding the Workings of thy own Will. Now this is not requiring thee to become a Fool, or to give up thy Claim to Sense and Reason, but is the shortest Way to have thy Sense and Reason delivered from Folly, and thy whole rational Nature strengthened, enlightened, and guided by that Light which is Wisdom it self.

A Child, that obediently denies his own Will and own Reason, to be guided by the Will and Reason of a truly wise and understanding Tutor, cannot be said, to make himself a Fool, and give up the Benefit of his rational Nature, but to have taken the shortest Way to have his own Will and Reason made truly a Blessing to him.

Secondly, here is to be seen, the true Ground and Necessity of that Universal Mortification, and Self-denial with regard to all irregular Appetites, Tempers, Passions and Judgments, it is because our Nature as fallen from the Life of God, is in a State of Contrariety to the Order and End of our Creation, a continual Source of disorderly Appetites, corrupt Tempers, and false Judgments. And therefore every irregular Motion of it is to be mortified, changed, and purified from its *natural State*, before we can enter into the Kingdom of God. Thus when our Lord saith, Except a Man hateth his Father and Mother, yea, and his own Life, he cannot be my Disciple ; it is because our best Tempers are yet carnal, and full of the Imperfections

perfections of our fallen Nature. The Doctrine is just and good, not as if Father and Mother were to be hated; but *that Love*, which an unregenerate Person or *natural Man*, hath towards them, is a blind *Self-love*, full of the Weakness and Partiality with which fallen Man loves, honours, esteems, and cleaves to himself: this Love born from corrupt Flesh and Blood, and polluted with Self, is to be *hated*, and *parted* with, that we may love them with a Love *born* of God, with such a Love, and on such a Motive as Christ hath loved us. And then the Disciple in *Christ* far exceeds all others in the Love of Parents. Again our *own Life* is to be *hated*, and the reason is plain, it is because there is nothing lovely in it, the Life of the natural Man is pure unmixed *Idolatry*, he lives wholly to himself, and not to God, it is a Life that is Dead to Heaven, a Legion of Evil, a monstrous Birth of the Serpent, the World, and the Flesh, all *this own Life* is to be absolutely hated, all this Self is to be *denied* and mortified, if the Nature, Spirit, Tempers, and Inclinations of *Christ* is to be brought to Life in us. For it is as impossible to live both their Lives at once, as for a *Body* to move two contrary Ways at the same Time. And therefore proper Mortifications and Self-denials have an absolute Necessity in the Nature of the Thing itself.

Thus when our Lord further saith, unless a Man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple, the Reason is plain, and the Necessity absolute; it is because all that the natural Man hath, is in the Possession of *Self-love*, and therefore this Possession is to be absolutely *forsaken* and parted with. All that he hath is to be put into other Hands, to be given to divine Love, or this *natural Man* can be changed into a Disciple of *Christ*. For Self-love in *all that it hath*, is *earthly*, *sensual*, and *Devilish*, and therefore must have all taken away from it; and then to the natural Man all is lost, he hath *nothing* left, all is laid down at the Feet of *Jesus*. And then all Things are common as soon as Self-love hath lost the Possession of them; for the Heart devoted to God hath given all to the Poor, because all that such a Person doth is in order to please God.

All turning to Self, is so far turning *from* God, and so much as we have of Self-love, so much we have of a hellish, earthly Weight, that must be taken off, or there can be no Ascension into Heaven; but thou wilt perhaps say, if all *Self-love* is to be renounced, then all Love of our Neighbour is renounced along with it, because the Commandment is, only *to love our Neighbour as ourselves*. The Answer here is easy, and yet no Quarter given to Self-love. There is but one only Love in Heaven, and yet the Angels of God love one another in the *same manner*, as they love themselves. the Matter is thus: the one supreme unchangeable Rule of Love, which is a *Law* to all intelligent Beings of all Worlds, and will be a Law to all Eternity, is this, viz. *That God alone is to be loved for himself, and all other Beings only in him and for him*. Whatever intelligent Creature lives not under this Rule of Love, is so far fallen from the Order of his Creation, and is till he returns to this eternal Law of *Love*, an *Apostate* from God and incapable of the Kingdom of Heaven, for Love is the fulfilling of the Law and that on which hangs all the Law and Prophets.

Now if God alone is to be loved for *himself*, then no Creature is to be loved for *itself*; and so all *Self-love*, in every Creature is absolutely condemned.

And if all created Beings are to be loved *in* and *for* God, then my Neighbour is to be loved, as I love myself, and I am only to love myself, as I love my Neighbour, or any other created Being, that is, *in* and *for* God. And thus the Command of loving our Neighbour as ourselves stands firm, and yet all Self-love is plucked up by the Root. But what is loving any Creature *in* and *for* God? It is when we Love it as it is God's *Work*, *Image*, and *Delight*, when we Love it as it is God's, and *belongs* to him, this is loving it *in* God, and when all that we wish, intend, or do to it, is done from a Love of God, for the Honour of God, and in Conformity to the Will of God, this is loving it *for* God, this is the *one Love* that is, and must be the Spirit of all Creatures, that live united to God. Now this is no speculative Refinement or fine spun Fiction
of

of the Brain, but the simple Truth, a first Law of Nature and a necessary Band of Union between God and the Creature. The Creature is not in God, is a Stranger to him, has lost the Life of God in itself, whenever its Love does not thus begin and end in God.

The Loss of this Love, was the *Fall* of Man, as it opened in him a Kingdom of *Self*, in *which* Satan, the World, and the Flesh, could all of them bring forth their own Works. If therefore, Man is to rise from his Fall, and return to his Life in God; there is an absolute Necessity that *Self*, with all his Brood of gross Affections, be deposed, that his first Love, in and for which he was created, may be born again in him. Christ came into the World to *save Sinners*, to destroy the Works of the Devil. Now *Self* is not only the Seat and Habitation, but the very *Life* of Sin, and the Works of the Devil are all wrought in *Self*, it is his peculiar Work-house, and therefore Christ is not come as a Saviour from Sin, as a Destroyer of the Devil in any of us, but *so far* as *Self* is beaten down, and overcome in us. If it is literally true, what our Lord said, *That his kingdom is not of this World*, then it is a Truth of the same Certainty, that no one is a Member of this Kingdom, but he that in the literal Sense of the Words, renounces the Spirit of this World. Christians might as well part with half the Articles of their Creed, or but half believe them, as to really refuse, or but by halves enter into these Self-denials. For all that is in the *Creed*, is only to bring forth this Dying and Death to all, and every Part of the old Man, that the Life and Spirit of Christ may be formed in us, *viz.* the new inner Man.

To this Purpose tended all St. *Paul's* Labours, as he himself testifieth; my little Children of whom I labour in Love until Christ be *formed* in you; and if this is not *done*, or *doing* in us, we are still unredeemed, as our Redemption is this new Birth, for except ye be born again ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; and though the Saviour of the World is come, he is not come *in* us, he is not received by us, is a Stranger to us, is not ours, if his Life is not within us; now the
Life

Life of Christ cannot be within us, but so far as the Spirit of the World, Self-love, Self-esteem, and Self-seeking are renounced and driven out of us, and *except Christ dwelleth in us we are Reprobates.*

Hence we may also learn the true Nature and Worth of all *Self-denials* and *Mortifications*, as to their Nature, considered in themselves, they have nothing of *Goodness* or *Holiness*, nor are any real Parts of our Sanctification, they are not the true Food or Nourishment of the divine Life in our Souls, they have no quickning sanctifying Power in them, their only Worth consists in this, that they remove the Impediments to Holiness, break down that which stands between God and us, and make Way for the quickning, sanctifying Spirit of God to operate on our Souls: Which Operation of God is the *one only* Thing that can raise the divine Life in the Soul, or help it to the smallest Degree of real Holiness, or spiritual Life. As in our Creation, we had only that *Degree* of a divine Life, which the Power of God derived into us; as then all that we had and were, was the *sole Operation* of God in the Creation of us, so in our Redemption, or regaining that first Perfection, which we have lost, all must be again the Operation of God, *every Degree* of the divine Life restored in us, be it ever so small, must and can be nothing else but so much of the Life and Operation of God found again in the Soul. All the Activity of Man in the Works of Self-denial, has no Good in itself, but is only to open an Entrance for the *one only* Good, the Light of God, to operate upon us.

Hence also we may learn the Reason, why many People not only lose the Benefit, but are even the worse for all their Mortifications; it is because they mistake the whole Nature and worth of them, they practise them for their *own sake*, as Things good in themselves, they think them to be *real Parts* of Holiness, and so rest in them, and look no *farther*, but grow full of Self-esteem, and Self-admiration for their own Progress in them. This makes them Self sufficient, morose, severe Judges of all those that fall short of their Mortifications.

And

And thus *Self-denials* do only that for them, which *Indulgences* do for other People, they withstand and hinder the Operation of God upon their Souls, and instead of being *really* Self-denials, they strengthen and keep up the Kingdom of *Self*.

There is no avoiding this fatal Error, but by deeply entering into this great Truth, that all our own Activity and Working, has no good in it, can do no Good to us, but as it leads and turns us in the best manner to the Spirit of God, *which* alone brings Salvation to the Soul. *Stretch forth thy Hand*, said our Lord to the Man, *that had a withered Hand*, he did so, and *it was immediately made whole as the other*.

Now had this Man any Ground for Pride or a high Opinion of himself, for the Share he had in restoring of this Hand? yet just such is our Share in the raising up of the Spiritual Life within us, all that we can do by our own Activity, is only like this Man's stretching out his Hand; the rest is the work of Christ, the only giver of Life to the withered Hand, or the dead Soul. We can only then do living Works, when we are so far born again, as to be able to say with the Apostle, *yet not I but Christ that liveth in me*. But to return and further shew how the Soul that feels the Call of God to Repentance, is to behave under it, that this stirring of the divine Power in the Soul, may have its full effect, and bring forth the Birth of the new Man in *Christ Jesus*; we are to consider it, (as in truth it is) as the *Seed* of the divine Nature within us, that can only grow by its *own Strength*, and Union with God.

It is a divine Life, and therefore can grow from nothing but divine Power, when the Virgin *Mary* conceived, the Birth of the holy *Jesus*, all that she did towards it herself, was only this single Act of Faith and Resignation to God. *Behold the Handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy Word*. And this is all that we can do towards Christ's being formed in us, now this Truth is easily consented to, and a Man thinks he believes it, because he consents to it, or rather does not deny it. But this is not enough, it is to be apprehended in a deep, full, and practical Assurance, in such a Manner.

ner as a Man knows and believes that he did not create the Stars, or cause Life to rise up in himself; and then it puts the Soul in a right State, that makes room for the Operation of God upon it. His Light then enters with full Power into the Soul, and his holy Spirit moves and directs all that is done in it, and so Man lives again in God as a new Creature; for this Truth thus firmly believed will have these two most excellent Effects: First, it will keep the Soul fixed and continually turned towards God in Faith, Prayer, Desire, Confidence and Resignation to him, for all that it wants to have done in it; which will be a continual Source of all divine Virtues and Graces. The Soul thus turned to God, must be always receiving from him; it stands at the true door of all divine Communications, and the Light of God as freely enters into it, as the Light of the Sun enters into the Air. Secondly it will fix and ground the Soul in a true and lasting Self-denial; for by thus knowing and owning *our own nothingness* and inability, that we have no other Capacity for Good, but that of receiving it from God alone, *Self* is wholly denied, its Kingdom is destroyed, no room is left for spiritual Pride, and Self esteem; we are saved from a Pharisaical Holiness, from wrong Opinions of our own Works and good Deeds, and from a multitude of Errors, the most dangerous to our Souls, all which arise from the *Something* that we take ourselves to be either in Nature or Grace. But when we once apprehend but in some good Degree, the *All* of God, and the Nothingness of ourselves, we have got a Truth whose Usefulness and Benefit, no Words can express; it brings a Kind of Infallibility into the Soul, in which it dwells; all that is vain and false and deceitful, is forced to vanish and fly before it. When our Religion is founded on this Rock, it has the Firmness of a Rock, and its height reaches unto Heaven; the World, the Flesh, and the Devil can do no hurt to it; all Enemies are known, and all disarmed by this great Truth, dwelling in our Souls. It is the Knowledge of the *All* of God, that makes *Cherubims* and *Seraphims*, to be Flames of divine Love: For where this *All* of God is truly known, and felt in any

any Creature, there its whole Nature is Love, and nothing but Love can rise in it, or come from it, a Love that begins and ends in God, and where this Love is born in any Creature, there a Seraphick Life is born along with it; for this pure Love introduces us into God, then we dwell in him and he in us, we are one with him and he with us; and this is the true End of all Religion, to conduct us to this happy State. Our Lord assures us, that without him we can do nothing, and that he and his Father will come unto us, and dwell with us.

There is but one *Salvation* for all Mankind, and that is the Life of God in the Soul. God has but *one Design* or Intent towards all Mankind, and that is to introduce his own Life, Light, and Spirit into them, that they all may be so many Images, Temples, and Habitations of the holy Trinity; this is God's Will to all.

Our Redeemer tells us, that if a Man's Ways please him, his Father and he will come unto *him*, and make their abode with *him*.

Now there is but one *possible Way* for Man to attain this Life of God in the Soul; and that is, *the Desire of the Soul turned to God*: for this Desire must attend all outward acts of Worship or they become an Abomination to God: And when this Desire is alive and breaks forth, then the lost *Sheep* is found, and the Shepherd hath it upon his Shoulders: Through this *Desire* the poor *prodigal Son* leaveth his *Husks* and *Swine*, and hasteth to his Father, 'tis because of this *Desire* that the Father seeth the Son, while yet afar off, that he runs out to meet him, falleth on his Neck and kisseth him. See here how plainly we are taught, that no sooner is this Desire *arisen* and in *Motion* towards God, but the *Operation* of God's Spirit answers to it, cherishes and welcomes its first Beginnings, signified by the Father's seeing and having Compassion on his Son, whilst yet afar off, that is in the first Beginnings of his Desire.

Thus does this *Desire* do all, it brings the Soul to God, and God into the Soul, it unites with God, it co-operates with God, and is one Life with God. Suppose this Desire not to be alive, not in Motion in the Soul,

Soul, and then all the Sacrifices, the Service, the Worship either of the Law or the Gospel, are but *dead Works*, that bring *no Life* into the Soul, nor beget any Union between God and it. Suppose this *Desire* to be awakened and fixed upon God, and then the divine Life or Operation of God enters into them, and the Man is a new Creature, or Christ is forming in him.

Oh! my God, just and good, how great is thy Love and Mercy to Mankind, that Heaven is thus open, and *Christ* thus the *common* Saviour to all that turn the Desire of their Hearts to thee? Oh! sweet Power of the *Bruiser* of the Serpent that stirs and works in Man, and gives him a Power and *Desire*, to find his Happiness in God? O holy Jesus heavenly *Light*, that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World, that redeemeth every Soul that followeth thy Light, which is always within him! O holy Trinity, immense Ocean of divine Love, in which all Mankind live, and move, and have their Being! none are separated from thee but those who turn from thee, all who turn to thee are embraced in the Arms of thy Mercy, all such are Partakers of thy divine Life; for thou hast said, that he who cometh to thee, thou wilt in no wise reject; for no sooner is the finite *Desire* of the Creature in Motion towards God, but the infinite Desire of God is united with it, co-operates with it. And in this united Desire of God and the Creature, is the Salvation and Life of the Soul brought forth. For the Soul is shut out of God, and imprisoned in its Working of Flesh and Blood, merely and solely because it desires to live to the Vanity of this World, this *Desire* is its Darkness, its Death, its Imprisonment, and Separation from God.

When therefore the *first Spark* of a Desire after God arises in thy Soul, cherish it with all thy Care, give all thy Heart into it, it is nothing less than a Touch of the divine *Load-stone*, that is to draw thee out of the Vanity of Time, into the Riches of Eternity. Arise therefore, and follow it as gladly as the wise Men of the *East* followed the *Star* from Heaven that appeared to them; it will lead thee to the Birth of Jesus, not in a Stable at *Bethlehem* in *Judea*, but to the Birth of Jesus in thy own dark fallen Soul.

Christ

Christ saith, *I am the Light of the World, he that followeth me, walketh not in Darkness.* He directs us only to himself; he is the Morning Star, who riseth in us, and shineth in the Darkness of our Nature. O how great a Triumph is there in the Soul, when he ariseth in it? then a Man knows as he never knew before, that he is a Stranger in a foreign Land.

End of the first Part.



A N

E X T R A C T

From the SECOND PART of the

SPIRIT of PRAYER,

A

D I A L O O U E

B E T W E E N

Academicus, Rusticus, and Theophilus.

Acad. **W**ELL met, honest *Rusticus*. I can now tell you with much Pleasure, that we shall soon see a *Second Part* of the Spirit of Prayer. And as soon as I get it, I will come and read it to you.

Rust. I have often told you, *Academicus*, that I wondered at your Eagerness and Impatience to see more of this Matter. As to my Part, I have no such Thirst within me, and should make no Complaint, if it never came out.

Acad.

Acad. My Friend *Rusticus*, you can't read ; and that is the Reason that you are not in my State of Impatience to see another Book.

Rust. Indeed *Academicus*, you quite mistake the Matter. The first Part of the *Spirit of Prayer* you read to me more than three or four times, and that is the Reason, why I am in no State of Eagerness after a second Part. I have found in the First Part, that God is always in me, that Christ is always within me ; that he is the inward *Light* and *Life* of my Soul, a *Bread* from Heaven, of which I may always eat ; a *Water* of eternal *Life* springing up in my Soul, of which I may always drink. O my Friend, these Truths have opened a new Life in my Soul : I am brought home to myself ; the Veil is taken off from my Heart ; I have found my God ; I know that this his Dwelling-place his Kingdom, is within me. My eyes, my Ears, my Thoughts, are all turned inwards ; for how could I be said to have felt these great Truths, to be sensible of these Riches of Eternity treasur'd up in my Soul, to know what a great Good the Divine Nature is in me, and to me, if, instead of turning all the Desire and Delight of my Heart towards them, I only felt a Longing and Desire to read more concerning the *Spirit of Prayer* ? No, *Academicus*, another, and a better Fire is kindled within me ; my Heart is in Motion, and all that is within me tends towards God ; and I find that nothing concerns me more, than to keep my Heart from wandering after any thing else. I now know to what it is that I am daily to die ; and to what it is that I am daily to live ; and therefore look upon every Day as lost, that does not help forwards both this Death, and this Life, in me. I have not yet done half, what the first Part of the *Spirit of Prayer* directs me to do ; and therefore have but little Occasion to call out for a Second.

Theoph. Indeed, *Academicus*, I must own, that honest *Rusticus*, as you call'd him, has spoken well. Your Education has so accustomed you to the Pleasure of reading Variety of Books, that you hardly propose any other End in reading, than the Entertainment of your Mind :

Mind: Thus the Spirit of Prayer has only awakened in you a Desire to see another Part upon the same Subject. This Fault is very common to others, as well as Scholars, and even to those who only delight in reading good Books.

Philo for this twenty Years has been collecting and reading all the *spiritual* Books he can hear of. He reads them, as the *Criticks* read Commentators and Lexicons; to be nice and exact in telling you the *Stile*, *Spirit*, and *Intent*, of this or that spiritual Writer, how one is more accurate in this, and the other in that. *Philo* will ride you forty Miles in Winter to have a Conversation about spiritual Books, or to see a Collection larger than his own. *Philo* is amazed at the Deadness and Insensibility of the Christian World, that they are such Strangers to the inward Life and spiritual Nature of the Christian Salvation; he wonders how they can be so zealous for the outward Letter and Form of Ordinances, and so averse to that spiritual Life, that they all point at, as the one Thing needful. But *Philo* never thinks how wonderful it is, that a Man who knows the new Creature to be the Whole, should yet content himself with the Love of Books upon the new Creature instead of being one himself. For all that is chang'd in *Philo*, is his Taste for Books. He is no more dead to the World, no more delivered from himself, is as fearful of Adversity, as fond of Prosperity, as easily provoked and pleased with Trifles, as much governed by his own Will, Tempers, and Passions, as unwilling to deny his Appetites, or enter into War with himself, as he was *twenty Years* ago. Yet all is well with *Philo*; he has no Suspicion of himself; he dates the Newness of his Life, and the Fulness of his Light, from the Time that he discovered the Pearl of Eternity in spiritual Authors.

All this, *Academicus*, is said on your Account, that you may not lose the Benefit of this Spark of the Divine Life that is kindled in your Soul, but may conform yourself suitably to so great a Gift of God.

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It demands at present an Eagerness of another Kind, than that of much reading even upon the most spiritual Matters.

Acad. I thank you, *Theophilus*, for your good Will towards me; but did not imagine my Eagerness after such Books to be so great and dangerous a Mistake. And if I don't yet entirely give into what you say, it is because a Friend of yours has told us (and as I thought by way of Direction), that he has been a diligent Reader of all the spiritual Authors from the apostolical *Dionysius* down to the celebrated *Fenelon* of *Cambray*: And therefore it would never have come into my Head, to suspect it to be a Fault, or dangerous, to follow his Example.

Theoph. I have said nothing, my Friend, with a Design of hindering your Acquaintance with all the truly spiritual Writers. I would rather in a right Way help you to a true intimacy with them: For they are Friends of God, entrusted with his Secrets, and Partakers of the divine Nature: And he that converses rightly with them, has an Happiness that can hardly be over-valued.

My Intention is only to abate, for a time, a Spirit of Eagerness after much reading, which in your State has more of Nature than Grace in it; which seeks Delight in a Variety of new Notions, and rather gratifies Curiosity, than reforms the Heart.

Suppose you had seen an Angel from Heaven, who had discovered to you a Glimpse of its own internal Brightness, and of that glorious Union in which it lived with God, opening more of itself to the inward Sight of your Mind, than you could either forget or relate. Suppose it had told you with a piercing Word, and living Impression, that all its own angelic and heavenly Brightness was hid in yourself, concealed from you under a bestial Covering of Flesh and Blood; that this Flesh and Blood was become the Master of it, would not suffer it to breathe, or stir, or come to Life in you. Suppose it had told you, that all your Life had been spent in helping this Flesh and Blood to more and more Power over you, to hinder you from knowing
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and feeling this divine Life within you. Suppose it had told you, that to this Day you had lived in the grossest *Self-idolatry*, loving, serving, honouring, and adoring yourself, instead of loving, serving, and adoring God with all your Heart, and Soul, and Spirit: That all your Intentions, Projects, Cares, Pleasures, and Indulgences, had been only so much Labour to bring you to the Grave in a total Ignorance of that great Work, for which alone you was born into the World.

Suppose it had told you, that all this Blindness and Insensibility of your State, was obstinately and wilfully brought upon yourself, because you had boldly slighted and resisted all the daily inward and outward Calls of God to your Soul, all the Teachings, Doings, and Sufferings, of a Son of God to redeem you. Suppose it left you with this *Farewel*, O Man, awake; thy Work is great, thy Time is short, I am thy last Trumpet; the *Grave* calls for thy Flesh and Blood, thy Soul must enter into a new Lodging. To be born again is to be an Angel: Not to be born again, is to become a Devil.

Tell me now, *Academicus*, what would you expect from a Man, who had been thus awakened, and pierced by the Voice of an Angel? Could you think he had any Sense left, if he was not cast into the deepest Depth of Humility, Self-dejection, and Self-abhorrence? Casting himself with a broken Heart, at the Feet of the divine Mercy, desiring nothing but that, from that Time, every Moment of his Life might be given unto God, in the most perfect Denial of every Temper, Will and Inclination, that nourish'd the Corruption of his Nature: Wishing and praying from the Bottom of his Heart, that God would lead him into, and through every thing inwardly and outwardly, that might destroy the evil Workings of his Nature, and awaken all that was holy and heavenly within him; that the Seed of Eternity, the Spark of Life, that he had so long quench'd and smother'd under earthly Rubbish, might breathe, and come to Life, in him.

Or would you think he was enough affected with this angelic Visit, if all that it had awakened in him,

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was only a Longing and eager Desire to hear the same, or another Angel talk again?

Acad. Theophilus, you have said enough: For all that is within me consents to the Truth and Justness of what you have said. I now feel, in the strongest Manner, that I have been rather amused, than edified, by what I have read.

Theoph. A spiritual Book, *Academicus*, is a Call to as real and total a Death to the Life of corrupt Nature, as that which *Adam* died in Paradise, was to the Life of Heaven. He indeed died at once totally to the divine Life in which he was created: But as our Body of Earth is to last to the End of our Lives; so to the End of our earthly Life, every Step we take, every Inch of our Road, is to be made up of Denial, and dying to ourselves; because all our Redemption consists in our regaining that first Life of Heaven in the Soul, to which *Adam* died in Paradise. And therefore the one single Work of Redemption is the one single Work of Renovation, called the new Man; or the raising up of a Life, and Spirit, and Tempers, and Inclinations, contrary to that Life and Spirit which we derive from our earthly fallen Parents. To think therefore of any thing, but the continual Denial of our earthly Nature, is to overlook the very one Thing on which all depends. And to hope for any Thing, to trust or pray for any Thing, but the *Life of God*, or a *Birth of Heaven*, in our Souls, is as useless to us, as placing our Hope and Trust in a graven Image. Thus saith the Christ of God, the one Pattern, and Author of our Salvation: *If any Man will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, bate his own Life, take up his daily Cross, and follow me.* And again: *Unless a Man be born again from above, of Water and the Spirit, he cannot see, or enter into the Kingdom of God.*

Now is your Time, *Academicus*, to enter deeply into this great Truth. You are just come out of the Slumber of Life, and begin to see with new Eyes the Nature of your Salvation. You are charmed with the Discovery of a Kingdom of Heaven hidden within you, and long to be entertained more and more with the Nature,
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Progress, and Perfection of the Opening of the Kingdom of God in your Soul.

But, my Friend, stop a little. It is indeed great Joy, that the *Pearl of great Price* is found ; but take notice, that it is not yours, you can have no Possession of it, 'till, as the Merchant did, *you sell all that you have*, and buy it. Now *Self* is all that you have, it is your sole Possession ; you have no Goods of your *own*, nothing is yours but *this Self*. The Riches of *Self* are your *own Riches* ; but *all this Self* is to be parted with, before the Pearl is yours. Think of a lower Price, or be unwilling to give thus much for it ; plead in your Excuse, that you keep the Commandments, and then you are that very rich young Man in the Gospel, who went away sorrowful from our Lord, when he had said, *If thou wilt be perfect*, that is, if thou wilt obtain the Pearl, *sell all that thou hast, and give to the Poor* ; that is, die to all thy *Possession of Self*, and then thou hast given all that thou hast to the Poor, all that thou hast is devoted and used for the Love of God and thy Neighbour. This selling all, *Academicus*, is the Measure of your dying to *Self* ; all of it is to be given up ; it is an *apostate Nature*, a *stolen Life*, brought forth in Rebellion against God ; it is a continual Departure from him. It corrupts every thing it touches ; it defiles every thing it receives ; it turns all the Gifts and Blessings of God into Covetousness, Partiality, Pride, Hatred, and Envy. All these Tempers are born, and bred, and nourished, in *Self* ; they have no other Place to live in, no Possibility of Existence, but in that Creature which is fallen from a Life in God, into a Life in *Self*.

Acad. Pray, Sir, tell me more plainly, what this *Self* is, since so much depends upon it.

Theoph. It is the cause of Hell, Darkness, Pain, and Disquiet. It is the great Antichrist, the old Serpent, the devouring Beast, mentioned in the Revelation of St. *John*.

Acad. You rather terrify than instruct me, by this Description.

Theoph. It is indeed a very frightful Matter ; it contains every thing that Man has to dread and hate, to

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resist and avoid. Yet be assured, my Friend, that, careless and merry as the World is, every Man that is born into it, has all these Enemies to overcome within himself. And every Man, 'till he is in the Way of Renovation, is more or less governed by them. No Hell in any remote Place, no Devil that is separate from you, no Darkness or Pain that is not within you, no Antichrist either at *Rome* or *England*, no furious Beast, no fiery Dragon, without, or apart from you, can do you any Hurt, without your own Consent.

Die to this Self, to this inward Nature ; and then all outward Enemies are overcome. Live to this Self, and then, when this Life is out, all that is within you, and all that is without you, will be nothing else but a mere seeing and feeling this Hell. This is the great Trial, or Strife of human Life, whether a Man will live to the Lusts of the *Beast*, the Guile of the *Serpent*, the Pride and Wrath of the *Dragon*, or give himself up to the Meekness, the Patience, the Sweetness, the Simplicity, the Humility, of the Lamb of God.

This is the Whole of the Matter between God and the Creature. On one side, Wrath awakened by the rebellious Angels ; and on the other side, the Meekness of the Son of God, the Patience of divine Love coming down from Heaven, to stop and overcome the Fire and Wrath that is broken out in Nature and Creature. Your Father *Adam* has introduced you into a World from whence Paradise is departed. Your Flesh and Blood is kindled in that Sin, which first brought forth a murdering *Cain*. But, dear Soul, be of good Comfort ; for the *Meekness*, the *Love*, the Son of God is become Man, has given himself, that in him, and with him, and by a Birth from him, Heaven and Paradise may be again opened both within thee, and without thee, not for a Time, but to all Eternity.

This, my Friend, is the true End of Religion : It means nothing, it intends nothing, but to overcome that earthly Life, which overcame *Adam* in the Fall, that made him a Prisoner of Hell, and a Slave to the corrupt Workings of earthly Flesh and Blood. And therefore you may see, and know with a mathematical

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Certainty,

Certainty, that the one Thing necessary for every fallen Soul, is to die to all the Life that we have from this World, that the Life of Heaven may be again born in him. The Life of this World is the Life of a *Beast*, and of the *Serpent*.

Hence it is that Sin rides in Triumph over Church and State, and from the Court to the Cottage all is over-run with Sensuality, Guile, Falseness, Pride, Wrath, Envy, Selfishness, and every Form of Corruption. Every one swims away in this Torrent, but he who hears and attends to the Voice of the Son of God *within* him, calling him to die to this Life, to take up his Cross, and follow him. Much learned Pains has been often taken to prove *Rome*, or *Constantinople*, to be the Seat of the Beast, the Antichrist, the Scarlet Whore, &c. But, alas! they are not at such a Distance from us, they are the Properties of fallen human Nature, and are all of them alive in our own Selves, till we are dead or dying to all the Spirit and Tempers of this World. They are every where, in every Soul, where the heavenly Nature, of the Son of God is not. But when the human Soul turns from itself, and turns to God, dies to itself, and lives to God in the Spirit, Tempers, and Inclinations of the Holy Jesus, loving, pitying, suffering, and praying for all its Enemies, and overcoming all Evil with Good, as this Christ of God did; then, but not till then, are these Monsters separate from it. For Covetousness and Sensuality of all kinds, are the devouring *Beast*: Religion governed by a worldly, trading Spirit, and gratifying the partial Interests of Flesh and Blood, is the *Scarlet Whore*; Guile, and Craft, and Cunning, are the very Essence of the *Serpent*; *Self-Interest* and *Self-exaltation*, are the whole Nature of *Antichrist*. Pride, Persecution, Wrath, Hatred, and Envy are the Essence of the *fiery Dragon*.

This, *Academicus*, is the fallen human Nature, and this is the *old Man*, which is alive in every one, though in various Manners, till he is born again from above. To think therefore of any thing in Religion, or to pretend to real Holiness, without totally dying to this *old Man*, is building Castles in the Air; and can bring forth

forth nothing, but *Satan* in the Form of an Angel of Light. Would you know, *Academicus*, whence it is, that so many false Spirits have appeared in the World, who have deceived themselves and others with false Fire, and false Light, laying Claim to Inspirations, Illuminations, and Openings of the Divine Life, pretending to do Wonders under extraordinary Calls from God? It is this; they have turned to God, without turning from themselves; would be alive in God, before they were dead to their own Nature; a thing as impossible in itself, as for a Grain of Wheat to be alive before it dies.

Now Religion in the Hands of Self, or corrupt Nature, serves only to discover Vices of a worse kind, than in nature left to itself. Hence are all the disorderly Passions of religious Men, which burn in a worse Flame, than Passions only employed about worldly Matters: Pride, Self-Exaltation, Hatred, and Persecution, under a Cloak of religious Zeal, will sanctify Actions, which Nature left to itself, would be ashamed to own.

You may now see, *Academicus*, with what great Reason I have called you, at your first setting out, to this great Point, *the total dying to Self*, as the only Foundation of a solid Piety. All the fine Things you hear or read of an inward and spiritual Life in God, all our Expectations of the Light and Holy Spirit of God, will become a false Food to your Soul, till you only seek for them thro' Death to Self.

Observe, Sir, the Difference which Cloaths make in those, who have it in their Power to dress as they please: Some are all for Shew, Colours, and Glitter; others are quite fantastical and affected in their Dress: Some have a grave and solemn Habit; others are quite simple and plain in the whole Manner. Now all this Difference of Dress is only an outward Difference, that covers the same poor Carcase, and leaves it full of all its own Infirmities. Now all the Truths of the Gospel, when only embraced and possessed by the *old Man*, make only such superficial Difference, as is made by Cloaths. Some put on a solemn, formal, prudent,

prudent, outside Carriage; others appear in all the Glitter and Shew of religious Colouring, and spiritual Attainments; but under all this outside Difference, there lies the poor fallen Soul, imprisoned, unhelped, in its own fallen State. And thus it must be, it is not possible to be otherwise, till the spiritual Life begins at the true Root, grows out of *Death*, and is born in a broken Heart, *an Heart broken off from its own natural Life*. Then Self-Hatred, Self-Contempt, and Self-Denial, is as suitable to this new-born Spirit, as Self-Love, Self-Esteem, and Self-Seeking, is to the unregenerate Man. Let me, therefore, my Friend, conjure you, not to look forward, or cast about for spiritual Advancement, till you have rightly taken this *first Step* in a religious Life. All your future Progress depends upon it: For this Depth of Religion goes no deeper, than the Depth of your Malady: For Sin has its Root in the Bottom of your Soul, it comes to Life in your Flesh and Blood, and breathes in the Breath of your natural Life; and therefore, till you die to Nature, you live to Sin; and whilst this Root of Sin is alive in you, all the Virtues you put on, are only like *fine painted Fruit* hung upon a bare Tree.

Acad. Indeed *Theophilus*, you have made the Difference between true and false Religion plain to me, as the Difference between Light and Darkness. But pray Sir, tell me how I am to take this *first Step*, which you so much insist upon.

Theoph. You are to turn wholly from yourself, and to give up yourself wholly unto God, in this or the like twofold Form of Words or Thoughts:

“ Oh my God, with all the Strength of my Soul,
 “ assisted by thy Grace, I desire and resolve to resist
 “ and deny all my own Will, earthly Tempers, selfish
 “ Views, and Inclinations; every thing that the Spirit
 “ of this World, and the Vanity of fallen Nature,
 “ prompts me to. I give myself up wholly and solely
 “ unto Thee, to be all thine, to have, and do, and be,
 “ inwardly and outwardly, according to thy good
 “ Pleasure. I desire to live for no other Ends, with
 “ no other Designs, but to accomplish the Work which
 “ thou

“ thou requirest of me, an humble, obedient, faithful,
 “ thankful, Instrument in thy Hands, to be used as
 “ thou plearest.”

You are not to content yourself, my Friend, with now and then, or even many times, making this Oblation of yourself to God. It must be the daily, the hourly Exercise of your Mind ; till it is wrought into your very Nature, and becomes an essential State and Habit of your Mind, till you feel yourself as habitually turned from all your own Will, selfish Ends, and earthly Desires, as you are from Stealing and Murder ; till the whole Turn and Bent of your Spirit points as constantly to God, as the Needle touched with the Loadstone does to the North. This, Sir, is your first, and necessary Step in a religious Life ; this is the Key to all the Treasures of Heaven ; this unlocks the sealed Book of your Soul, and makes room for the Light and Spirit of God to arise up in it. Without this, spiritual Life, is but spiritual Talk, and only assists Nature to be pleas'd with an Holiness that it has not.

The Necessity of this first Step, and the Folly of pretending to succeed without it, is thus represented by our blessed Lord : *What Man intending to build an House*——

All our Ability and Preparation to succeed in this great Affair, lies in this *first Step*. You may perhaps think this an hard Saying. But don't go away sorrowful, like the young Man in the Gospel, because he had great Possessions. For, my Friend, you little think what a Deliverance you will have from all Hardships, and what a flow of Happiness is found even in this Life, as soon as the Soul is *thus* dead to *Self*, freed from its own Passions, and wholly given up to God ; of which I shall speak to you by-and-by. I have told you the Price of the new Birth. I shall now leave you to consider, whether you will be so wise a Merchant, as to give up all the Wealth of the old Man for this heavenly Pearl.

From a true view of Man we come to the utmost Certainty that as he is the Son of a Male and Female of this World, so likewise he is a Son of the Lamb of

God, and has a Birth from Heaven again in his Soul. Hence we see also, that all that we have to fear, to hate, and renounce ; all that we have to love, to desire, and pray for ; is *all within* ourselves. No Man can be miserable but by falling a Sacrifice to his own inward Passions and Tempers ; nor any one happy, but by overcoming *himself*. How ridiculous would a Man seem to you, who should torment himself, because the Land in *America* was not well till'd ? Now every thing that is not within you, that has not its Birth and Growth in your own Life, is at the same Distance from you, is as foreign to your own Happiness or Misery, as an *American* Story. Your Life is all that you have ; and nothing is a part of it, or makes any Alteration in it, but the Good or Evil that is in the Workings of your own Life. Hence you may see why our Saviour, who, tho' he had all Wisdom, and came to be the Light of the World, is yet so short in his Instructions, and gives so small a Number of Doctrines to Mankind, whilst every moral Teacher writes Volumes upon every single Virtue. It is because he knew what they knew not, that our whole Malady lies in this, that the *Will* of our Mind, the *Lust* of our Life, is turned into this World : And that nothing can relieve us, or set us right, but the *turning* the Will of our Mind, and the Desire of our Hearts, to God, and that Heaven which we had lost. And hence it is that he calls us to nothing, but a *total Denial* of ourselves, and the *Life* of this World, and to a Faith in him, as the Worker of a new Birth and Life in us. Did we but receive his short Instructions with true Faith and Simplicity of Heart, as the Truth of God, we should not want any one to comment or enlarge upon them. A Traveller that has taken a wrong Road, does not want an Orator to discourse to him on the Nature of Roads, but to be told, in short, which is his right Way. Now this is our Case ; it was not a Number of things that brought about our Fall ; *Adam* only took up a *wrong Will*, that brought him and us into our present State, or *Road of Life* ; and therefore our Saviour uses not a Number of Instructions to set us right ; he only tells us to renounce the

the *false Will*, which brought *Adam* into the *Life* of this World, and to take up that Will, which should have kept him in Paradise. Observe now, my Friend, the great Benefit that we have from the Account of Man's original Perfection, and the Nature of his Fall. It opens the true Ground of our Religion, and the absolute Necessity of it; it forces us to know, that our whole natural Life is a mistaken Road, and that Christ is alone our true Guide out of it. It teaches us every Reason for renouncing ourselves, and loving the whole Nature of our Redemption, as the greatest Joy and Desire of our Hearts. We are not only compelled, as it were, to hunger after it, to run with eagerness into its Arms; but are also delivered from all Mistakes about it; from all the Difficulties and Perplexities, which divided Sects have brought into it. For, from this View of Things, we see, not uncertainly, but with the fullest Assurance, that our *Will* and our *Heart* is all; that nothing else either finds or loses God; and that all our Religion is only the Religion of the Heart. We see with open Eyes, that as a *Spirit of Longing* after the Life of this World, made *Adam* and us to be the poor Pilgrims on Earth, that we are; so the *Spirit of Prayer*, or the longing Desire of the Heart after Christ, and God, and Heaven, breaks all our Bonds asunder, casts all our Cords from us, and raises us out of the Miseries of Time, into the Riches of Eternity. Thus seeing and knowing our first and our present State, every thing calls us to Prayer; and the Desire of our Heart becomes the Spirit of Prayer. And when the Spirit of Prayer is born in us, when Prayer is no longer considered as only the Business of this or that Hour, but is the continual Panting or breathing of the Heart after God. Its Petitions are not picked out of Manuals of Devotion; it loves its own Language, it speaks most when it says least. If you ask what its Words are, they are *Spirit*, they are *Life*, they are *Love*, that unite with God.

Acad. I apprehend, Sir, that what you here say of the Spirit of Prayer, will be taken by some People for

a Censure upon *Hours* and *Forms* of Prayer ; though I know you have no such Meaning.

Rust. Pray let me speak again to *Academicus* : His Learning seems to be always upon the Watch, to find out some Excuse for not receiving the whole Truth. Does not *Theophilus* here speak of the *Spirit of Prayer* as a *State* of the Heart, which is become the governing Principle of the Soul's Life ? And if it is a living State of the Heart, must it not have its Life in itself, independent of every outward Time and Occasion ? And yet must it not, at the same time, be that alone which disposes and fits the Heart to rejoice and delight in Hours, and Times, and Occasions of Prayer ? Suppose he had said, that *Honesty* is an *inward living* Principle of the Heart, a Rectitude of the Mind, that has all its Life and Strength *within* itself : Could this be thought to censure all Times and Occasions of performing outward Acts of *Honesty* ? Now the *Spirit of Prayer* differs from all outward Acts and Forms of Prayer, just as the *Honesty of the Heart*, or a living Rectitude of Mind, differs from outward and occasional Acts of *Honesty*. And yet should a Man overlook or disregard Times and Occasions of outward Acts of *Honesty*, on Pretence that true *Honesty* was an inward living Principle of the Heart ; who would not see, that such a one had as little of the inward Spirit, as the outward Acts of *Honesty* ? St. *John* saith, *If any Man hath this World's Goods, and seeth his Brother hath need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion to him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him ?* Just so, and with the same Truth, it may be said, if a Man overlooketh, neglecteth, or refuseth, Times and Hours of Prayer, *how dwelleth the Spirit of Prayer* in him ? And yet its own Life and Spirit is vastly superior to, independent on, and stays for no particular Hours, or Forms of Words. And in this Sense it is truly said, that it has its own Language, that it wants not to pick Words out of Manuals of Devotion, but is always speaking forth Spirit and Life, and Love towards God. But pray, *Theophilus*, do you go on as you intended.

Theoph.

Theoph. I shall only add, before we pass on to another Point, that, from what has been said of the first State and Fall of Man, it plainly follows, that the *Sin* of all Sins, or the *Heresy* of all Heresies, is a *worldly Spirit*. We are apt to consider this Temper only as an Infirmary, or pardonable Failure; but it is indeed the great *Apostasy* from God, and the Divine Life. It is not a single Sin, but the whole Nature of all Sin, that leaves no Possibility of coming out of our fallen State, till it be totally renounced with all the Strength of our Hearts. Every Sin, be it of what kind it will, is only a Branch of the worldly Spirit that lives in us. *There is but one that is Good*, saith our Lord, *and that is God*. In the same Strictness of Expression it must be said, there is but *one Life* that is good, and that is the Life of God and Heaven. Depart in the least Degree from the Goodness of God, and you depart into Evil; because nothing is good but his Goodness.

Choose any Life, but the Life of God and Heaven, and you choose Death; for Death is nothing else but the Loss of the Life of God. The Creatures of this World have but *one Life*, and that is the Life of this World: This is their *one Life*, and *one Good*. Eternal Beings have but *one Life* and *one Good*; and that is the Life of God. The Spirit of the Soul is in itself nothing else but a Spirit breathed forth from the Life of God; and for this only End, that the Life of God, the Nature of God, the Working of God, the Tempers of God, might be manifested in it. God could not create Man to have a Will of his own, and a Life of his own, different from the Life and Will that is in himself; this is more impossible than for a good Tree to bring forth corrupt Fruit. God can only delight in his own Life, his own Goodness and his own Perfections; and therefore cannot love, or delight, or dwell in any Creatures, but where his own Goodness and Perfections are to be found. Like can only unite with Like, Heaven with Heaven, and Hell with Hell; and therefore the Life of God must be the Life of the Soul, if the Soul is to unite with God. Hence it is, that all the Religion of fallen Man, all the Methods of our Redemption, have

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only this *one End*, to take from us that *strange* and *earthly* Life we have gotten by the Fall, and to kindle again the Life of God and Heaven in our Souls. Not to deliver us from that gross and sordid Vice call'd *Covetousness*, which Heathens can condemn, but to take the *whole Spirit* of the World entirely from us, and that for this necessary Reason; because *All that is in the World, the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life is not of the Father*; that is, is not that Life, or Spirit of Life, which we had from God by our Creation; *but is of this World*; is brought into us by our Fall from God into the Life of this World. And therefore a worldly Spirit is not to be considered as a single Sin, or as something that may consist with some real Degrees of Christian Goodness; but as a State of *real Death* to the Kingdom and Life of God in our Souls. Management, Prudence, or an artful Trimming betwixt God and Mammon, are here all in vain; it is not only the Grossness of an outward, visible, worldly Behaviour, but the *Spirit, the Prudence, the Subtlety, the Wisdom*, of this World, that is our *Separation* from the Life of God.

Hold this, therefore, *Academicus*, as a certain Truth, that the *Heresy* of all Heresies is a *worldly Spirit*. It is the whole Nature and Misery of our Fall; it keeps up the Death of our Souls; and, so long as it lasts, makes it impossible for us to be born again from above. It is the greatest Blindness and Darkness of our Nature, and keeps us in the grossest Ignorance both of Heaven and Hell. For though they are both of them within us, yet we feel neither the one, nor the other, so long as the Spirit of this World reigns in us. Light and Truth, and the Gospel so far as they concern Eternity, are all empty Sounds to the worldly Spirit. His own Good, and his own Evil, govern all his Hopes and Fears; and therefore he can have no Religion, or be farther concerned in it, than so far as it can be made serviceable to the Life of this World. *Publicans* and *Harlots* are all born of the Spirit of this World; but its highest Births are the *Scribes, the Pharisees, and Hypocrites*, who turn Godliness into Gain, and serve
God

God for the Sake of Mammon ; these live, and move, and have their Being, in and from the Spirit of this World.—Of all things therefore, my Friend, detest the Spirit of this World, or there is no Help ; you must live and die an *utter Stranger* to all that is divine and heavenly. You will go out of the World in the same Poverty and Death to the Divine Life, in which you entered into it. For a worldly, earthly Spirit can know nothing of God ; it can know nothing, feel nothing, taste nothing, delight in nothing, but with earthly Senses, and after an earthly Manner. *The natural Man*, saith the Apostle, *receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, they are Foolishness unto him. He cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned* ; that is, they can only be discerned by *that Spirit* which he hath not. Now the true *Ground* and *Reason* of this, and the absolute Impossibility for the natural Man, how polite, and learned, and acute soever he be, is this ; it is because all *real Knowledge* is *Life* or a living *Sensibility* of the thing that is known. There is no *Light* in the *Mind*, but what is the *Light of Life* ; so far as our *Life* reaches, so far we understand, and *feel* and know, and no farther. All after this is only the *Play* of our *Imagination*, amusing itself with the *dead Pictures* of its own *Ideas*. Now this is all that the natural Man, who hath not the *Life of God* in him, can possibly do with the things of God. He can only contemplate them, as things *foreign* to himself, as so many *dead Ideas*, that he receives from Books, or *Hearsay* ; and so can learnedly dispute and quarrel about them, and laugh at those as *Enthusiasts*, who have a living *Sensibility* of them. He is only the worse for his *hearsay*, *dead Ideas* of Divine Truths ; they become a bad *Nourishment* of all his natural *Tempers* : He is proud of his *Ability* to discourse about them, and loses all *Humility*, all *Love* of God and Man, through a vain and haughty *Contention* for them. This is the constant *Effect* of the Religion of the natural Man, who is under the *Dominion* of the Spirit of this World. He cannot know more of Religion, nor make a better *Use* of his *Knowledge*, than this comes to ; and all for this plain Reason, because he stands at the
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same Distance from a living *Sensibility* of the Truth, as the Man that is born blind does from a *living Sensibility* of Light. Light must first be the *Birth* of his own Life, before he can enter into a *real* Knowledge of it. Yet so ignorant is the natural Man with all his learned Acuteness, that he does not so much as know, that there is, and must be, this great *Difference* between real Knowledge and dead Ideas of things; and that a Man cannot know any thing, any further than as his *own Life* opens the Knowledge of it in himself.

The Measure of our Life is the Measure of our Knowledge; and as the Spirit of our Life worketh, so the Spirit of our Understanding conceiveth. If our Will worketh with God, though our natural Capacity be ever so mean and narrow, we get a real Knowledge of God and heavenly Truths; for every thing must feel that, in which it lives.

But if our Will worketh with Satan, and the Spirit of this World, let our Parts be ever so bright, our Imaginations ever so soaring; yet all our living Knowledge, or real Sensibility, can go no higher or deeper, than the *Mysteries* of Iniquity, and the *Lusts* of Flesh and Blood. For where our Life is, there, and there only, is our Understanding; and that for this plain Reason; because as Life is the *Beginning* of all Sensibility, so it is and must be the *Bounds* of it; and no Sensibility can go any further than the Life goes, or have any other *Manner* of Knowledge, than as the Manner of its Life is. If you ask what *Life* is, or what is to be understood by it? it is in itself nothing else but a *working Will*; and no Life could be either good or evil, but for this Reason, because it is a *working Will*: Every Life, from the highest Angel to the lowest Animal, consists in a working Will; and therefore as the Will worketh, as that is with which it uniteth, so hath every Creature its *Degree*, and *Kind*, and *Manner* of Life; and consequently as the Will of its Life worketh, so it hath its *Degree*, and *Kind*, and *Manner* of Conceiving and Understanding, of Liking and Disliking. For nothing feels, or tastes, or understands, or likes or dislikes, but the Life that is in us. The Spirit that leads our Life, is the Spirit that
forms.

forms our Understanding. The Mind is our Eye, and all the Faculties of the Mind see every thing according to the State the Mind is in. If *selfish Pride* is the Spirit of our Life, every thing is only seen, and felt, and known, through this Glass. Every thing is dark, senseless and absurd, to the proud Man, but that which brings Food to this Spirit. He understands nothing, he feels nothing, he tastes nothing, but as his Pride is made *sensible* of it, or capable of being *affected* with it. His *working Will*, which is the Life of his Soul, liveth and worketh only in the Element of Pride; and therefore what suits his Pride, is his *only Good*; and what contradicts his Pride, is *all* the Evil that he can feel or know. His Wit, his Parts, his Learning, his Advancement, his Friends, his Admirers, his Successes, his Conquests, all these are the *only* God and Heaven that he has any *living* Sensibility of. He indeed can talk of a Scripture-God, a Scripture-Christ, and Heaven; but these are only the ornamental Furniture of his Brain, whilst Pride is the God of his Heart. We are told, that *God resisteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble*. This is not to be understood, as if God by an *arbitrary Will*, only chose to deal thus with the proud and humble Man. Oh no. The true Ground is this, the *Resistance* is on the Part of Man. Pride resisteth God, it rejecteth him, it turneth from him, and chooseth to worship and adore something else instead of him; whereas Humility leaveth all for God, falls down before him, and opens all the Doors of the Heart for his Entrance into it. This is the only Sense in which God resisteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble. And thus it is in the true Ground and Reason of every Good and Evil that rises up in us; we have neither Good nor Evil, but as it is the *natural* Effect of the *Workings* of our own Will, either with or against God; and God only interposes with his Threatnings and Instructions, to *direct* us to a right Use of our Wills, that we may not blindly work ourselves into Death, instead of Life. But take now another Instance like that already mentioned. Look at a Man whose *working Will* is under the Power of *Wrath*. He sees, and
hears,

hears, and feels, and understands, and talks wholly from the *Light* and *Sense* of Wrath. All his Faculties are only so many Faculties of Wrath; and he knows of no Sense or Reason, but that which his Wrath discovers to him. I have appealed, *Academicus*, to these Instances, only to illustrate and confirm that great Truth, which I before asserted; namely, that the *working of our Will*, or the State of our Life, governs the State of our Mind, and forms the *Degree* and *Manner* of our Understanding and Knowledge: And that as the *Fire* of our Life burns, so is the *Light* of our Life kindled. And all this only to shew you the utter *Impossibility* of knowing God, and Divine Truths, till your Life is Divine, and wholly dead to the Life and Spirit of this World; since our Light and Knowledge can be no better, or higher than the State of our Life and Heart is. Tell me now, do you feel the truth of all this? I say feel, because no Truth is possess'd, till you have a feeling and living Sensibility of it.

Acad. You have touched my Heart; and I now wish, with the *Psalmist*, that I had the Wings of a Dove, that I might flee away, and be at Rest; flee away from the Spirit of this World, to be at Rest in the sweet Tranquillity of a Life born again of God. You know, Sir, that in the Morning you told me of a certain *first Step*, that of all Necessity must be the *Beginning* of a spiritual Life; you gave me till To-morrow to speak my Mind and Resolution about it. But you have now extorted my Answer from me, I cannot stay a Moment longer: With all the Strength that I have I turn from every thing that is not God, and his holy Will; with all the Desire, Delight, and Longing of my Heart, I give up myself wholly to the Life, Light, and Holy Spirit of God; pleased with nothing in this World, but as it gives Time, and Place, and Occasions, of doing and being *that*, which my heavenly Father would have me to do and be; seeking for no Happiness from this earthly fallen Life, but that of overcoming all its Spirit and Tempers. But I believe, *Theophilus*, that you had something farther to say.

Theoph.

Theoph. Indeed, *Academicus*, there is hardly any knowing, when one has said enough of the evil Effects of a worldly Spirit. It is the Canker that eateth up all the Fruits of our other good Tempers; it leaves no Degree of Goodness in them, but transforms all that we are or do in its own earthly Nature. The Philosophers of old began all their Virtue in a total Renunciation of the Spirit of this World. They saw with the eyes of Heaven, that Darkness was not more contrary to Light, than the Wisdom of this World was contrary to the Spirit of Virtue; therefore they allowed of no Progress in Virtue, but so far as a Man had overcome himself, and the Spirit of this World.

This gave Solidity to all their Instructions, and proved them to be Masters of true Wisdom. But the Doctrine of the Cross of Christ, the last, the highest, the most finishing Stroke given to the Spirit of this World, that speaks more in *one Word* than all the Philosophy of voluminous Writers, is yet profess'd by those, who are in more Friendship with the World, than was allow'd to the Disciples of *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, or *Epicætetus*.

Nay, if those antient Sages were to start up amongst us with their Wisdom, they would bid fair to be treated by the Sons of the Gospel, if not by some Fathers of the Church, as dreaming Enthusiasts.

But, *Academicus*, this is a standing Truth, the World can only love its own, and Wisdom can only be justify'd of her Children. *Epicætetus* told one of his Scholars, that *then* he might *first* look upon himself as having made *some true* Proficiency in Virtue, when the World took him for a Fool; an Oracle like that, which said, *The Wisdom of this World is Foolishness with God.*

If you was to ask me, what is the Apostasy of these last Times, or whence is all the Degeneracy of the present Christian Church, I should place it all in a *worldly Spirit*. If here you see open Wickedness, there only Forms of Godliness; if here superficial Holiness, political Piety, crafty Prudence; if almost every where you see a *Jewish* Blindness, and Hardness of Heart, this is only so many Forms and proper Fruits of the worldly Spirit.

Spirit. This is the great *Net* with which the Devil becomes a Fisher of Men; and be assur'd of this, my Friend, that every Son of Man is in this *Net*, till, thro' and by the Spirit of Christ, he breaks out of it.

I say the *Spirit* of Christ, for nothing else can deliver him from it. Trust now to any Kind or Form of religious Observances, to any Number of the most plausible Virtues, to any Kinds of Learning, or Efforts of human Prudence, and then I will tell you what your Case will be; you will overcome *one* Temper of the World, *only* and *merely* by cleaving to another. For nothing leaves the World, nothing renounces it, nothing can possibly overcome it, but singly and solely the Spirit of Christ. Hence it is, that many learned Men, with all the rich Furniture of their Brain, live and die Slaves to the Spirit of this World; and can only differ from gross Worldlings, as the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* differ from *Publicans* and *Sinners*: It is because the Spirit of Christ is not the *one only* thing that is the *Desire* of their Hearts; and therefore their Learning only works in and with the Spirit of this World, and becomes itself no small Part of the *Vanity of Vanities*. Would you farther know, *Academicus*, the evil Nature and Effects of a worldly Spirit, you need only look at the blessed Power and Effects of the *Spirit of Prayer*; for the one goes downward with the same Strength as the other goes upwards; the one betroths and weds you to an earthly Nature, with the same Certainty as the other espouses and unites you to Christ, and God, and Heaven. The Spirit of Prayer is a pressing forth of the Soul out of this earthly Life; it is a stretching with all its Desire after the Life of God; it is a leaving, as far as it can, all its *own Spirit*, to receive a Spirit from above, to be one Life, one Love, one Spirit with Christ in God. This Prayer, which is an emptying itself of all its own Lusts and natural Tempers, and an opening itself for the Light and Love of God to enter into it, is the Prayer in the Name of Christ, to which nothing is deny'd. For the Love which God bears to the Soul, his eternal, never-ceasing Desire to enter into it, to dwell in it, and open the Birth of his Holy Word and Spirit

Spirit in it, stays no longer than till the Door of the Heart opens for him. For nothing does or can keep God out of the Soul, or hinder his holy Union with it, but the *Desire* of the Heart turned from him. And the Reason of it is this; it is because the *Life* of the Soul is in itself nothing else but a *working Will*; and therefore wherever the Will worketh or goeth, there, and there only, the Soul liveth, whether it be in God, or the Creature.

Whatever it desireth, that is the *Fewel* of its Fire; and as its Fewel is, so is the Flame of its Life. A Will, given up to earthly Goods, is at Grass with *Nebuchadnezzar*, and has one Life with the Beasts of the Field: For earthly Desires keep up the same Life in a Man and an Ox. For the one only Reason, why the Animals of this World have no Sense or Knowledge of God, is this; it is because they cannot form any other than earthly Desires, and so can only have an earthly Life. When therefore a Man wholly turneth his working Will to earthly Desires, he dies to the Excellency of his natural State, and may be said only to live, and move, and have his Being, in the Life of this World, as the Beasts have.—Earthly Food, &c. only desired and used for the Support of the earthly Body, is suitable to Man's present Condition, and the Order of Nature: But when the Desire, the Delight, and Longing of the Soul is set upon earthly Things, then the Humanity is degraded, is fallen from God; and the Life of the Soul is made as earthly and bestial, as the Life of the Body: For the Creature can be neither higher nor lower, neither better nor worse, than as the Will worketh: For you are to observe, that the Will hath a divine and *magic* Power; what it desireth, that it taketh, and of that it *eateth* and *liveth*. Where ever, and in whatever, the *working Will* chooseth to *dwell* and *delight*, that becometh the Soul's *Food*, its *Condition*, its *Body*, its *Cloathing*, and *Habitation*: For all these are the true and certain Effects and Powers of the working Will.

Nothing doth or can go with a Man into Heaven, nothing followeth him into Hell, but that in which the Will dwelt, with which it was fed, nourished, and clothed,

cloathed, in this Life. And this is to be noted well, that Death can make no Alteration of this State of the Will; it only takes off the outward, worldly Covering of Flesh and Blood, and forces the Soul to see, and feel, and know, what a Life, what a State, *Food, Body, and Habitation*, its own working Will has brought forth for it. Oh *Academicus*, stop a while, and let your Hearing be turned into Feeling. Tell me, is there any thing in Life that deserves a Thought, but how to keep this *Working* of our Will in a right State, and to get that *Purity* of Heart, which alone can see, and know, and find, and possess God? Is there any thing so frightful as this worldly Spirit, which turns the Soul from God, makes it an House of Darkness, and feeds it with the Food of Time, at the Expence of all the Riches of Eternity?

On the other hand, what can be so desirable a Good as the *Spirit of Prayer*, which empties the Soul of all its own Evil; separates Death and Darknefs from it; leaves *Self, Time, and the World*; and becomes one Life, one Light, one Love, one Spirit with Christ, and God, and Heaven?

Think, my Friends, of these Things, with something more than thoughts; let your hungry Souls eat of the Nourishment of them as a Bread of Heaven; and desire only to live, that with all the *Working* of your Wills, and the *whole Spirit* of your Minds, you may live and die united to God: There is no true and real *Conversion*, whether it be from Infidelity, or any other Life of Sin, till a Man comes to know, and feel, that nothing less than his *whole* corrupt Nature is to be parted with, and yet finds in himself no *Possibility* of doing it. This is the Inability that can bring us at last to say with the Apostle, *When I am weak, then am I strong*. This is the Distress that stands near the Gate of Life; this is the Despair by which we lose all our own Life, to find a new one in God. For here in this Place it is, that *Faith, and Hope, and true Seeking to God and Christ*, are born.—But till all is Despair in ourselves, till all is lost that we had any Trust in as our own; till then, Faith and Hope, and turning to God
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in Prayer, are only things learn'd and practis'd by *Rule* and *Method* ; but they are not born in us, are not *living* Qualities of the new Birth, till we have done feeling any Trust or Confidence in ourselves. In this State one *Sigh* or *Look*, or the least *Turning* of our Hearts to God for Help, would be the Beginning of our Salvation. Let us therefore try to improve this happy Moment, not so much by Arguments of Reason, as by the Arrows of that Divine Love which overflows all Nature and Creature.

For Love brought forth all the Creation ; it kindles the Life of Heaven ; it is the Song of all the Angels of God. It has redeemed the World ; it seeks for every Sinner upon Earth ; it embraces all the Enemies of God ; and from the Beginning to the End of Time, the one Work of Providence is the one Work of Love.

Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, were all of them Messengers of Divine Love. They came to kindle a Fire on Earth, and that Fire was the Love which burns in Heaven. Ask what God is ? His Name is Love ; he is the Good, the Perfection, the Peace, the Joy, the Glory, and Blessing, of every Life. Ask what Christ is ? He is the universal Remedy of all Evil broken forth in Nature and Creature ; he is the Destruction of Misery, Sin, Darkness, Death, and Hell. He is the Resurrection and Life of all fallen Nature. He is the unwearied Compassion, the long-suffering Pity, the never-ceasing Mercifulness of God to every Want and Infirmary of human Nature.

He is the breathing forth of the Life, and Spirit of God, into all the dead Race of *Adam*. He is the Seeker, the Finder, the Restorer, of all that was lost and dead to the Life of God. He is the Love, that, from *Cain* to the end of Time, prays for all its Murderers ; the Love that willingly suffers and dies among Thieves, that Thieves may have a Life with him in Paradise. The Love that visits Publicans, Harlots, and Sinners, that wants and seeks to forgive, where most is to be forgiven.

For the universal God is universal Love ; all is Love, but that which is hellish and earthly. All Religion

ligion is the Spirit of Love ; all its Gifts and Graces are the Gifts and Graces of Love ; it has no Breath, no Life, but the Life of Love. Nothing exalts, nothing purifies, but the Fire of Love ; nothing changes Death into Life, Earth into Heaven, Men into Angels, but Love alone. Love breathes the *Spirit* of God ; its Words and Works are the *Inspiration* of God. It speaketh not of itself, but the *Word*, the eternal Word of God speaketh in it ; for all that Love speaketh, that God speaketh, because Love is God. Love is Heaven revealed in the Soul ; it is Light, and Truth ; it is infallible ; it has no Errors, for all Errors are the Want of Love. Love has no more of Pride, than Light has of Darknels ; it stands and bears all its Fruits from a Depth and Root of Humility. It believes in one, holy, catholic God, the God of all Spirits ; it unites and joins with the catholic Spirit of the one God, who unites with all that is good, and is meek, patient, well-wishing, and long-suffering over all the Evil that is in Nature and Creature. Love like the Spirit of God, rideth upon the Wings of the Wind ; and is in Union and Communion with all the Saints that are in Heaven and on Earth. Love is quite pure ; it hath no By-ends ; it seeks not its own ; it has but *one Will*, and that is, to give itself into every thing, and overcome all Evil with Good. Lastly, Love is the *Christ* of God, it cometh down from Heaven ; it regenerateth the Soul from above, it is obedient to all God's *Ordinances*, and Commandments, it blotteth out all Transgressions ; it taketh from Death its Sting, from the Devil his Power, and from the Serpent his Poison. It healeth all the Infirmities of our earthly Birth ; it gives Eyes to the Blind, Ears to the Deaf, and makes the Dumb to speak ; it cleanses the Lepers, and casts out Devils, and puts Man in Paradise before he dies. It liveth wholly to the Will of him, of whom it is born ; its Meat and Drink is, to do the Will of God. It is the Resurrection and Life of every divine Virtue, a fruitful Mother of true Humility, boundless benevolence, unwearied Patience, and Bowels of Compassion. This, *Rusticus*, is the Christ, the Salvation, the Religion of divine Love, which alone
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can deliver us from the Evil that is in our own Nature, and give us Power to become the Sons of God.

Rust. But pray let us now hear, how we are to enter into this Religion of divine Love, or rather what God has done to introduce us into it, and make us Partakers again of his divine Nature.

Theoph. The first Work, or Beginning, of this redeeming Love of God, is in that *Immanuel*, or God with us, given to the first *Adam*, as the *Seed of the Woman*, which in him, and his Posterity, should bruise the Head, and overcome the Life, of the Serpent in our fallen Nature. Ask not therefore, how we shall enter into this Religion of Love and Salvation; for it is self entered into us, it has taken Possession of us from the Beginning. It lies as a Treasure of Heaven and Eternity in us; it cannot be divided from us by the Power of Man; we cannot lose it ourselves; it will never leave us, nor forsake us, till with our last Breath we die in the Refusal of it. This is the open Gate of our Redemption; we have not far to go to find it. It is every Man's own Treasure; it is a Root of Heaven, a Seed of God, sown into our Souls by the *Word* of God; and like a small Grain of Mustard-seed, has a Power of growing to be a tree of Life. You should, once for all, mark and observe, *where* and *what* the true Nature of Religion is; for here it is plainly shewn you, that its chief *Place* is within; its *Work* and *Effect* is *within*; its *Life*, is within; it is the raising a new Life, new Love, and a new Birth, in the inward Spirit of our Hearts. This is Religion, (which is solely to restore Man to his first and right State in God) and had its Beginning, and first Power, from the *Seed of the Woman*, the Treader on the Serpent's Head; and therefore all its Progress, from its Beginning to its last finished Work, is, and can be nothing else, but, the growing Power and Victory of the *Seed of the Woman*, over all the Evil brought by the Serpent into human Nature. For the Seed of the Woman is the Spirit, and Power, and Life of God, given or breathed again into Man, to be the Raisher and Redeemer of that first Life, which he had lost. This was the *spiritual* Nature of Religion in its first Beginning, and

and this is it *Nature* to the End of Time ; it is nothing else, but the Power, and Life, and Spirit of God, as *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, working, creating, and reviving Life in the fallen Soul, and driving all its Evil out of it. This is the true Rock, on which the Church of Christ is built ; God can do no Good to Man, can remove no Evil out of him, raise no divine Life in him, but so far as a Man *serves, worships, conforms*, and *gives* himself up to this *Operation* of the holy, triune God, as living and dwelling in the Soul. Keep close to this Idea of Religion, as an inward, spiritual Life in the Soul ; observe all its Works within you, the Death and Life that are found there ; seek for no Good, no Comfort, but in the inward Awakening of all that is holy and heavenly in your Heart ; and then, so much as you have of this inward Religion, so much you have of a real Salvation. Salvation is only a Victory over Nature ; so far as you resist and renounce your own vain, selfish, and earthly Nature, so far as you overcome all your own natural Tempers of the old Man, so far God enters into you, lives, and operates in you ; he is in you the Light, the Life, and the Spirit, of your Soul ; and you are in him that new Creature, that worships him in Spirit and in Truth. For divine Worship or Service is, and can be only performed by being *like-minded* with Christ ; nothing worships God, but the Spirit of Christ his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased. This is as true, as that *no Man hath known the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son revealeth him*. Look now at any thing as Religion, or divine Service, but in order to a strict unerring Conformity to the Life and Spirit of Christ ; and then, though every Day was full of Burnt-offerings, and Sacrifices, yet you would be only like those Religionists, who *drew near to God with their Lips, but their Hearts were far from him*.

For the Heart is always far from God, unless the Spirit of Christ be alive in it. But no one has the living Spirit of Christ, but he who in all his Conversation walketh, as he walketh. Consider these Words of the Apostle, *My little Children of whom I travel in Birth,*
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till Christ be formed in you. This is the Sum total of all, and, if this is wanting, all is wanting. Again, says he, *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly.*—*Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but the new Creature is all.* Nay, see how much farther he carries this Point, in the following Words; *Though I speak with the Tongues of Men and Angels, though I have the Gift of Prophecy, though I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, &c. and have not Charity (that is, have not the Spirit of Christ), it profiteth me nothing.* For by *Charity* here, the Apostle means neither more nor less, but strictly that same Thing, which in other Places, he calls the *new Creature*, *Christ formed in us*, and our being led by the Spirit of Christ. According to the Apostle, nothing availeth but the *new Creature*, nothing availeth but the Spirit of Charity here described; therefore this Charity, and the new Creature, are only two different Expressions of one and the same Thing, viz. the *Birth and Formation of Christ in us*. Thus saith he, *If any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*; nay, though he could say of himself (as our Lord says many will), *Have I not prophesied in the Name of Christ, cast out Devils, and done many wonderful Works?* yet such a one not being *led by the Spirit of Christ*, is that very Man, whose high State the Apostle makes to be a mere Nothing, because he hath not that Spirit of Charity, which is the Spirit of Christ. Again, *There is no Condemnation to those, who are in Christ Jesus*; therefore to be in Christ Jesus, is to have that Spirit of Charity, which is the Spirit, and Life, and Goodness of all Virtues. Now here you are to observe, that the Apostle no more rejects all outward Religion, when he says, *Circumcision is nothing*, than he rejects *Prophecy, and Faith, and Alms-giving*, when he says they *profit nothing*; he only teaches this solid Truth, that the Kingdom of God is within us, and that it all consists in the State of our Heart; and that therefore all outward Observances, all the most specious Virtues, profit nothing, are of no value, unless the hidden Man of the Heart, the new Creature, led by the Spirit of Christ, be the Doer of them.

Thus,

Thus, says he, *They who are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God.* And therefore none else, be they, who, or where, or what they will, Clergy, or Laity, none are, or can be, Sons of God, but they who give up themselves entirely to the Leading and Guidance of the Spirit of God, desiring to be mov'd, inspir'd, and govern'd, solely by it.

Again, *We are of the Circumcision who worship God in Spirit*; and to shew, that this is not a vain Pretence, he says in another Place, *The Manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal.* Therefore no Profit from any thing else; all Preaching and Hearing is vain, and all Preachers and Hearers stand chargeable with the Vanity of their religious Performances, who think of Preaching or Hearing profitably, any other Way, or by any other Power, than in and by the Holy Spirit of God dwelling and working in them. Thus again, *If the Spirit of him, who raised Jesus from the Dead, dwell in you, he also shall quicken your mortal Bodies by his Spirit, which dwelleth in you.* In vain therefore is Life expected, either for Body or Soul, but by the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Again, *Through him we both have Access by one Spirit to the Father*; therefore this one Spirit is the one only Way to God, and Salvation. Thus does all Scripture bring us to this Conclusion, that all Religion is but a dead Work, unless it be the Work of the Spirit of God; and that Sacraments, Prayers, Singing, Preaching, Hearing, are only so many appointed Ways of being fervent in the Spirit, and of giving up ourselves more and more to the inward working, enlightening, quickening, sanctifying Spirit of God within us; and all for this End, that the Fall may be taken from us, that Death may be swallowed up in Victory, and a true, real, Christ-like Nature formed in us. Now for the absolute Necessity, of this turning wholly to the Spirit of God, you need only know this plain Truth; namely, that the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Satan, or the Spirit of this world, are, and must be, the one or the other of them, the continual Leader, Guide, and Inspirer, of every thing that lives in Nature. There

is no going out from some one of these; the Moment you cease to be mov'd, quicken'd, and inspir'd, by God, you are infallibly moving and directed by the Spirit of *Satan*, or the World, or by both of them. And the Reason is, because the Soul of Man is a *Spirit*, and a *Life*, that in its whole Being is nothing else but a *Birth* both of God and Nature; and therefore, every Moment of its Life, it must live in some Union and Conjunction either with the Spirit of God governing Nature, or with the Spirit of Nature fallen from God, and working in itself. As Creatures therefore, we are under an absolute Necessity of being under the Motion, Guidance, and Inspiration, of some Spirit, that is more and greater than our own. All that is put in our own Power, is only the Choice of our *Leader*; but led and mov'd we must be, and by that Spirit, to which we give up ourselves, whether it be to the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of fallen Nature. To seek therefore to be always under the Inspiration and Guidance of God's Holy Spirit, and to act by an immediate Power from it, is not proud Enthusiasm, but as sober and humble a Thought, as suitable to our State, as to think of renouncing the World, and the Devil: For they never are, or can be, renounc'd by us, but so far as the Spirit of God is living, breathing, and moving in us. And that for this plain Reason, because nothing is contrary to the Spirit of *Satan*, and the World, nothing works, or can work, contrary to it, but the Spirit of Heaven.

Hence our Lord said, *He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth*; plainly declaring, that not to be with him, and led by his Spirit, is to be led by the Spirit of *Satan*, and the World. Ask now, what Hell is? It is Nature destitute of the Light and Spirit of God, and full only of its own Darkness. Ask what Heaven is? It is Nature quicken'd, enlighten'd, blessed, and glorify'd, by the Light and Spirit of God dwelling in it. What Possibility therefore can there be, of our dividing from Hell, or parting with all that is hellish in us, but by having the Life, Light, and Spirit of God living and working

ing in us? And here again, my Friends, you may see in the greatest Clearness, why nothing is available, nothing is Salvation, but the new Birth of a Christ-like Nature; it is because every thing else but this Birth, and Life of the Spirit, is only the Spirit of Satan, or the Spirit of this World. Have you any thing to object to these Things?

Acad. All that I now want to know is this, what I am to do, to procure this continual Operation of the Spirit of God within me. For I seem to myself, not to know this enough; and I am also afraid of certain Delusions, which I have heard many have fallen into, under Pretences of being led by the Spirit of God. Pray therefore, *Theophilus*, give me some Instructions on this Head.

Rust. Pray, Gentlemen, let an unlearned Man speak a Word here. Suppose, *Academicus*, you had a long, earnest Desire to be govern'd by a Spirit of Plainness and Sincerity in your whole Conversation. Would this put you upon asking for *Art*, and *Rules*, and *Methods*, or consulting some learned Man, or Book, to direct you, and keep you from Delusion? Would you not know and feel in yourself, that your own earnest Desire, and Love of Sincerity and Plainness, and your own inward Aversion to every thing that was contrary to it, must be the one only possible Way of attaining it, and that you must have it in that Degree, as you lov'd and lik'd to act by it? Now there is no more of *Art*, or any *Secret* requir'd to bring and keep you under the Direction of the Spirit of God, than under the Spirit of Plainness and Sincerity. The longing earnest Desire of the Heart brings you into the safe Possession of the one, as it does of the other. For it has been enough prov'd that the *Spirit of Prayer* forms the Spirit of our Lives, and every Man lives as the Spirit of Prayer leads him. Nay every Prayer for the Holy Spirit, is the Spirit itself praying in you. For nothing can turn to God, desire to be united to him, and governed by him, but the Spirit of God. The Impossibility of praying for the Spirit of God in vain is thus shewn by our blessed Lord: *If ye, being evil,*

know

know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask for it? But I here stop.

Acad. I don't know how to understand what *Rusticus* has said. For do not all good Christians daily pray for the Spirit of God? yet how few are led by it? Pray, *Theophilus*, do you speak here.

Theoph. People may be daily at the Service of the Church, and read long Prayers at home, in which are many Petitions for the Holy Spirit; and yet live and die, led and govern'd by the Spirit of the World; because all these Prayers, whether we hear them read by others, or read them ourselves, may be done in Compliance only to Rules, and Forms of Religion, as Things we are taught not to neglect; but, being only done thus, they are not the true, real Working of the Spirit of the Heart, nor make any real Alteration in it. But you are to observe, that *Rusticus* spoke of the *Spirit of Prayer*, which is the Heart's own Prayer, and which has all the Strength of the Heart in it. And this is the Prayer that must be affirm'd to be *always* effectual; it never returns empty; it eats and drinks that, after which it hungereth and thirsteth; and nothing can possibly hinder it from having that, which it prays for. This we are assur'd of from these Words of Truth itself; *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled.* But this Blessedness could not belong to Hungering, if truly the Hungry and Thirsty could ever be sent empty away. Every Spirit necessarily reaps that which it soweth, it cannot possibly be otherwise, it is the unalterable Procedure of Nature. If the Spirit soweth to the Flesh, it reapeth that Corruption which belongs to the Flesh; if it soweth to the Spirit, it reapeth the Fruits of the Spirit, which are eternal Life. *The Spirit of Prayer* therefore is the Opener of all that is good within us, and the Receiver of all that is good without us; it unites with God, is one Power with him; it works with him, and drives all that is not God out of the Soul. The Soul is no longer a Slave to its natural Impurity and Corruption, no longer imprisoned in its

own Death and Darkneſs, but till the Fire from Heaven, the Spirit of Prayer, is kindled in it.

Then begins the Reſurreſtion, and the Life; and all that which died in *Adam* comes to Life in Chriſt. Ask not therefore, *Academicus*, what you are to do to obtain the Spirit of God, to live in it, and be led by it; for your Power of having it, and your Meaſure of receiving it, are juſt according to that Faith and Earneſtneſs with which you deſire to be led by it. For the hungry Spirit of Prayer is *that Faith* to which all things are poſſible, to which all Nature, tho' as high as Mountains, and as ſtiff as Oaks, muſt yield and obey. It heals all Diſeaſes, breaks the Bands of Death, and calls the Dead out of their Graves. Look at the ſmall *Seeds* of Plants, ſhut up in their own dead Huſks, and cover'd with thick Earth, and ſee how they grow. What do they do? They hunger and thirſt after the Light and Air of this World. Their Hunger eats that which they hunger after, and this is their Vegetation. If the Plant ceaſes to hunger, it withers and dies; tho' ſurrounded with the Air and Light of this World.

This is the true Nature of the ſpiritual Life; it is as truly a *Vegetation*, as that of Plants; and nothing but its *own Hunger* can help it to the true Food of its Life. If this Hunger of the Soul ceaſeth, it withers and dies, tho' in the miſt of Divine Plenty. Our Lord, to ſhew us that the new Birth is really a State of ſpiritual Vegetation, compares it to a ſmall Grain of Muſtard-ſeed, from whence a great Plant ariſes. Now every Seed has a Life in itſelf, or elſe it could not grow. What is this Life? It is nothing elſe but an *Hunger* in the Seed, after the Air and Light of this World; which Hunger, being met and fed by the Light and Air of Nature, changes the Seed into a living Plant. Thus it is with the *Seed* of Heaven in the Soul; it has a Life in itſelf, or elſe no Life could ariſe from it. What is this Life? It is nothing elſe but an *Hunger* after God and Heaven; which no ſooner ſtir, or is ſuffer'd to ſtir, but it is met, embraced, and quicken'd, by the Light and Spirit of God and Heaven; and ſo a new

Man in Chriſt is form'd from the Seed of Heaven; as a

new

new Plant from a Seed in the Earth. Let us suppose now, that the *Seed* of a Plant had *Sense* and *Reason*; and that, instead of continually hungering after, and drawing in, the Virtue of the Light and Air of our outward Nature, it should amuse and content its Hunger with *reasoning* about the Nature of Hunger, and the different Powers and Virtues of Light and Air; must not such a Seed of all Necessity wither away, without ever becoming a living Plant? Now this is no false Similitude of the *Seed* of Life in Man: Man has a Power of drawing all the Virtue of Heaven into himself, because the Seed of Heaven is the *Gift* of God in his Soul, which wants the Light and Spirit of God to bring it to the Birth, just as the Seed of the Plant wants the Light and Air of this World; it cannot possibly grow up in God, but by taking in Light, Life, and Spirit from Heaven, as the Creatures of Time take in the Light, and Life, and Spirit of this World. If therefore the Soul, instead of hungering after Heaven, instead of eating the Flesh and Blood of the Christ of God, contents and amuses this Seed of Life with Ideas, and Notions, and Sounds, must not such a Soul of Necessity wither and die, without ever becoming a living Creature of Heaven? Wonder not therefore, *Academicus*, that *the Work* of our Salvation is, by the Scripture, confin'd to the Operation of the Spirit of God, *living* and *working* in us. It is for the same Reason, and on the same Necessity, that the Life and Growth of the Creatures of this World must be *wholly* ascribed to the Powers of this World, living and working in them. Nor does all this, in the least Degree, make a Man a *Machine*, or without any Power with regard to his Salvation. He must grow in God as the Plants grow in this World, from a Power that is not his own, as they grow from the Powers of outward Nature. But he differs entirely from the Plants in this; that an uncontrollable Will, which is his own, must be the Leader and Beginner of his Growth either in God or Nature. It is strictly true, that all Man's Salvation dependeth upon himself; and it is as strictly true, that *all the Work* of his Salva-

tion is *solely* the Work of God in his Soul. All his Salvation dependeth upon himself, because his *Will* has its Power of Motion in itself. As a Will, it can only receive that which it willeth; every thing else is absolutely shut out of it. For it is the unalterable Nature of the Will, that it cannot possibly receive any thing into it, but that which it willeth; its Willing is its only Power of receiving; and therefore there can be no possible Entrance for God or Heaven into the Soul, till the Will-Spirit of the Soul desireth it; and thus all Man's Salvation dependeth upon himself. On the other hand, nothing can create, effect, or bring forth, a Birth or Growth of the Divine Life in the Soul, but that Light and Spirit of God, which brings forth the Divine Life in Heaven, and all heavenly Beings. And thus the *Work* of our Salvation is wholly and solely the Work of the Light and Spirit of God, dwelling and operating in us. Thus, *Academicus*, you see that God is all; that nothing but his Life and working Power in us, can be our Salvation; and yet that nothing but the *Spirit of Prayer* can make it *possible* for us to have it, or be capable of it. And therefore neither you, nor any other human Soul, can be without the Operation of the Light and Spirit of God in it, but because its *Will* or its Spirit of *Prayer*, is turned towards something else; for we are always in Union with that with which our Will is united. Again: Look, *Academicus*, at the Light and Air of this World, you see with what a Freedom of Communication they overflow, enrich, and enliven every thing; they enter every-where, if not hindered by something that withstands their Entrance. This may represent to you the ever-overflowing free Communication of the Light and Spirit of God to every human Soul. They are every-where; we are encompass'd with them; our Souls are as near to them, as our Bodies are to the Light and Air of this World; nothing shuts them out of us, but the Will and Desire of our Souls, turn'd from them, and praying for something else. I say, *praying* for something else; for you are to notice this, as a certain Truth, that every Man's Life is a *continual State* of Prayer;

er; he is no Moment free from it, nor can possibly be so. For all our natural Tempers, be they what they will, Ambition, Covetousness, Selfishness, Worldly-mindedness, Pride, Envy, Hatred, Malice, or any other Lust whatever, are all of them in reality only so many different *Kinds* and *Forms* of a *Spirit of Prayer*, which is as inseparable from the Heart, as Weight is from the Body. For every natural Temper is nothing else, but a Manifestation of the Desire and Prayer of the Heart, and shews us how it *works* and *wills*. And as the Heart worketh and willeth, *such*, and no other, is its Prayer. All without this is only Form and Fiction, and empty beating of the Air. If therefore the working Desire of the Heart is not habitually turned towards God, if this is not our Spirit of Prayer, we are necessarily in a State of Prayer towards something else, that carries us from God, and brings all kind of Evil into us. For this is the Necessity of our Nature; pray we must, as sure as our Heart is alive; and therefore when the State of our Heart is not a Spirit of Prayer to God, we pray *without ceasing* to some or other Part of the Creation. The Man whose Heart habitually tends towards the Riches, Honours, Powers, or Pleasures of this Life, is in a *continual* State of Prayer towards all these things. His Spirit stands always *bent* towards them; they have his Hope, his Love, his Faith, and are the many Gods that he worships: And tho' when he is upon his Knees, and uses Forms of Prayer, he directs them to the God of Heaven; yet these are in Reality the God of his Heart, and, in a sad Sense of the Words, he really worships them in Spirit, and in Truth. Hence you may see, *Academicus*, how it comes to pass, that there is so much Praying, and yet so little of true Piety amongst us. The *Bells* are daily calling us to Church, our *Closets* abound with *Manuals* of Devotion, yet how little Fruit! It is all for this Reason, because our Prayers are not *our own*; they are not the Abundance of *our own* Heart; are not *found* and *felt* within us, as we feel our own Hunger and Thirst; but are only so many borrow'd Forms of Speech, which we use at certain Times and Occasions. And therefore it is no Wonder

that little Good comes of it. What Benefit could it have been to the *Pharisee*, if, with an Heart inwardly full of its own Pride and Self-exaltation, he had outwardly hung down his Head, smote upon his Breast, and borrow'd the *Publican's* Words, *God be merciful to me a Sinner*? What greater Good can be expected from our Praying in the Words of *David*, or Singing his Psalms seven times a Day, if our Heart hath no more of the Spirit of *David* in it, than the Heart of the *Pharisee* had of the Spirit of the humble *Publican*.

Acad. O *Theophilus*, Truth and Reason forces me to consent to what you say; and yet I am afraid of following you: For you here seem to condemn Forms of Prayer in publick, and *Manuals* of Devotion in private. What will become of Religion, if these are set aside or disregarded?

Theoph. Dear *Academicus*, abate your Fright. Can you think, that I am against your praying in the Words of *David*, or breathing his Spirit in your Prayers, or that I would censure your singing his Psalms seven times a Day? Remember how very lately I put into your Hands the Book call'd, *A serious Call to a devout Life*, &c. and then think how unlikely it is, that I should be against Times and Methods of Devotion. At three several Times, we are told, our Lord pray'd, repeating the *same Form of Words*; and therefore a set Form of Words are not only consistent with, but may be highly suitable to, the most divine Spirit of Prayer. If your own Heart, for Days and Weeks, was unable to alter, or break off from inwardly thinking and saying, *Hollowed be thy Name, thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done*; if at other times, for Weeks and Months, it stood always inwardly in another Form of Prayer, unable to vary, or depart from saying, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, with all thy holy Nature, Spirit, and Tempers, into my Soul; that I may be born again of Thee, a new Creature*; I should be so far from censuring such a *Formality* of Prayer, that I should say, blessed and happy are they, whose Hearts are ty'd to such a Form of Words. It is not therefore, Sir, a set Form of Words that is spoken against, but an *heartless* Form,

Form, a Form that has no Relation to, or Correspondence with, the State of the Heart that uses it. All that I have said is only to teach you the true Nature of Prayer, that it is only the Work of the Heart, and that the Heart only prays in Reality (whatever its Words are) for that which it habitually wills, likes, loves, and longs to have. It is not therefore the using the Words of *David*, or any other Saint, in your Prayers, that is censur'd, but the using them without that State of Heart, which first spake them forth; and the trusting to them, because they are a good Form; though in our Hearts we have nothing that is like them. It would be good to say incessantly with holy *David*, *My Heart is athirst for God.*—*As the Hart desireth the Water-brooks, so longeth my Soul after Thee, O God.* But there is no Goodness in saying daily these Words, if no such Thirst is felt or desired in the Heart. And, my Friend, you may easily know, that dead Forms of Religion, and Numbers of repeated Prayers, keep Men content with their State of Devotion, because they make use of such holy Prayers; tho' their Hearts, from Morning to Night, are in a State quite contrary to them, and join no farther in them, than in liking to use them at certain times.

Acad. I acquiesce, *Theophilus*, in the Truth of what you have said, and plainly see the Necessity of condemning what you have condemn'd; which is not the Form, but the *heartless* Form. But still I have a Scruple upon me: I shall be almost afraid of going to Church, where there are so many good Prayers offer'd up to God, as suspecting they may not be the Prayers or Language of my own Heart, and so become only a *Lip-labour*, or, what is worse, an *Hypocrisy* before God.

Theoph. I don't, *Academicus*, dislike your Scruple at all; for you do well to be afraid of saying any thing of yourself, or to God, in your Prayers, which your Heart does not truly say. It is also good for you to think, that many of the Prayers of the Church may go faster and higher than your Heart can in Truth go along with them. For this will put you upon a

right Care over yourself, and so to live, that, as a true Son of your Mother the Church, your Heart may be able to speak her Language conform to her Service, and find the Delight of your Soul in the Spirit of her Prayers. But this will only then come to pass, when the Spirit of Prayer is the Spirit of your Heart; then every good Word, whether in a Form, or out of a Form, whether heard, or read, or thought, will be as suitable to your Heart, as gratifying to it, as Food is to the hungry, and Drink to the thirsty Soul. But till the Spirit of the Heart is thus renew'd, till it is *empty'd* of all earthly Desires, and stands in an *habitual* Hunger and Thirst after God (which is the true Spirit of Prayer,) till then, all our Forms of Prayer will be, more or less, but too much like *Lessons* that are given to *Scholars*, and we shall mostly say them, only because we dare not neglect them. But be not discouraged, *Academicus*; take the following Advice, and then you may go to Church without any Danger of a mere Lip-labour or Hypocrisy; altho' there should be an *Hymn*, or a *Psalms*, or a *Prayer*, whose Language is higher than that of your own Heart. Do this: Go to the Church, as the *Publican* went into the Temple; stand *inwardly* in the Spirit of your Mind, in that *Form* which he outwardly express'd, when he cast down his Eyes, smote upon his Breast, and could only say, God be merciful to me a Sinner! Stand unchangeably (at least in your Desire) in *this Form* and State of Heart; it will sanctify every Petition that comes out of your Mouth; and when any thing is read, or sung, or pray'd, that is more exalted and fervent than your Heart is, if you make this an Occasion of a farther *sinking down* in the Spirit of the *Publican*, you will then be helped, and highly blessed, by those Prayers and Praises, which seem only to fit, and belong to, a better Heart than yours.

This, my Friend, is a Secret of Secrets; it will help you to reap where you have not sown, and be a continual Source of Grace in your Soul. This will not only help you to receive Good from those Prayers which seem too good for the State of your Heart, but will help you to find Good from every thing else:

For

For every thing that inwardly stirs in you, or outwardly happens to you, becomes a real Good to you, if it either finds or excites in you this humble Form of Mind: For nothing is in vain, or without Profit, to the humble Soul; like the Bee, it takes its Honey even from bitter Herbs; it stands always in a State of Divine Growth; and every thing that falls upon it, is like a Dew of Heaven to it. Shut up yourself therefore in this *Form* of Humility; all Good is inclosed in it; it is a Water of Heaven, that turns the Fire of the fallen Soul into the Meekness of the Divine Life; and creates that Oil out of which the Love to God and Man gets its Flame. Be inclos'd therefore always in it; let it be as a Garment wherewith you are always covered, and the Girdle with which you are girt; breathe nothing but in and from its Spirit; see nothing but with its Eyes; hear nothing but with its Ears: And then, whether you are in the Church, or out of the Church; hearing the Praises of God, or receiving Wrongs from Men, and the World; all will be Edification, and every thing will help forward your Growth in the Life of God.

Acad. Indeed *Theophilus*, this Answer to my Scruple is good: I not only like, but I love it much; it gives as well an Unction to my Heart, as a Light to my Mind. All my Desire now is, to live no longer to the World, to myself, my own natural Tempers and Passions, but wholly to the Will of the blessed and adorable God, moved and guided by his Holy Spirit.

Theoph. This Resolution, *Academicus*, only shews that you are just come to yourself; for every thing short of this earnest Desire to live wholly unto God, may be called a most dreadful Infatuation or Madness, an Insensibility that cannot be described. For what else is our Life, but a Tryal for the greatest Evil or Good that an Eternity can give us? What can be so dreadful as to die possessed of a wicked immoral Nature, or to go out of this World with Tempers that must keep us for ever burning in Fire and Brimstone? What has God not done to prevent this? His redeeming Love began with our Fall, and kindles itself as a Spark of Heaven in

in every fallen Soul. It calls every Man to Salvation, and every Man is forced to hear, though he will not obey his Voice. God has so loved the World, that his only Son hung and expired bleeding on the Cross, to extinguish our own Hell within us, to pour his heavenly Love into us, to shew us, that Meekness, Suffering, and Dying to our fallen Nature, is the *one, only, possible* Way for fallen Man to be alive again in God. Are we yet Sons of Pride, and led with Vanity? Do the Powers of Darkness rule over us! Do impure evil Spirits possess and drive on our Lives? Has Sin lost all its Power of frightening us! Is remorse of Conscience no longer felt? Are Falshood, Guile, Debauchery, Profaneness, Perjury, Bribery, Corruption, and Adultery, no longer seeking to hide themselves in Corners, but openly entering all our high Places, giving Battle to every Virtue, and laying Claim to the Government of the World? Are we thus near being swallowed up by a Deluge of Vice and Impiety? All this is not come upon us, because God has left us too much without Help from Heaven, or too much expos'd us to the Powers of Hell; but it is because we have rejected and despised the *whole Mystery* of our Salvation, and trampled under Foot the precious Blood of Christ, which alone has that omnipotence, that can either bring Heaven into us, or drive Hell out of us. O *Britain, Britain*, think that the Son of God saith unto thee, as he said, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy Children, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.* And now let me say, What aileth thee, O *British Earth*, that thou *quakest*, and the Foundations of thy Churches, that they *tatter*? Just *that same* aileth thee, as ailed *Judab's Earth*, when the Divine Saviour of the World, dying on the Cross, was *reviled, scorned, and mocked*, by the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*; then the *Earth quaked, the Rocks rent*, and the Sun refus'd to give his Light. Nature again declares for God, the Earth, and the Elements can no longer bear our Sins: *Jerusalem's Doom* for *Jerusalem's Sin* may well be feared by us. Oh ye miserable *Pens* dipt in
Satan's

Satan's Ink, that dare to publish the folly of believing in Jesus Christ, where will you hide your guilty Heads, when Nature dissolved shall shew you the Rainbow, on which the crucify'd Saviour shall sit in Judgment, and every Work receive its reward? O tremble! ye *apostate* Sons, that come out of the Schools of Christ, to fight *Lucifer's* Battles, and do that for him, which neither he, nor his Legions can do for themselves. Their inward Pride, Spite, Wrath, Malice and Rage against God, and Christ and human Nature, have no *Pens* but yours, no *Apostles* but you. They must be forced to work in the Dark, to steal privately into impure Hearts, could they not beguile you into a fond *Belief*, that you are *Lovers* of Truth, *Friends* of Reason, *Detectors* of Fraud, great *Genius's* and *Moral Philosophers*, merely and solely because ye blaspheme Christ, and the Gospel of God. Poor deluded Souls, rescued from Hell by the Blood of Christ, called by God to possess the Thrones of fallen Angels, permitted to live only by the Mercy of God, that ye may be born again from above, my Heart bleeds for you. Think, I beseech you, in time, what Mercies ye are trampling under your Feet. Say not that *Reason* and your intellectual Faculties, stand in your Way; that these are the *best Gifts*, that God has given you, and that these suffer you not to come to Christ. For all this is as vain a Pretence, and as gross a Mistake, as if you were to say, that you had nothing but your *Feet* to carry you to Heaven. For your *Heart* is the best and greatest *Gift* of God to you; it is the highest, greatest, strongest, and noblest *Power* of your Nature; it forms your whole Life, be it what it will; all Evil and all Good comes from it; your Heart alone has the *Key* of Life and Death; it does all that it will; Reason is but its *Play-thing*, and whether in Time or Eternity, can only be a *mere Beholder* of the *Wonders* of Happiness, or *Forms* of Misery, which the right or wrong *Working* of the Heart is entered into.

And as Humility is the necessary Preparation of Heart, in order to receive Grace, let me advise you to offer continually a Prayer to this Purpose unto God:

“ That

“ That, of *his* great Goodness, he would make known
 “ to you, and take from your Heart, every *Kind*, and
 “ *Form*, and *Degree* of Pride, whether it be from evil
 “ Spirits, or your own corrupt Nature; and that he
 “ would awaken in you the deepest *Depth* and *Truth* of
 “ all that Humility, which can make you capable of
 “ his Light and Holy Spirit.” Reject every Thought,
 but that of wishing and praying in this Manner from
 the bottom of your Hearts with such Truth and Earnestness,
 as a People in Torment wish and pray to be delivered from it.
 Now if ye dare not, if your Hearts will not, cannot give themselves up in this manner to the Spirit of Prayer,
 then ye may be fully assured, both what your Infidelity is, and from what it proceeds, as ye can be of the plainest Truth in Nature. This will shew you, how plainly you appeal to your *Reason* and *Speculation*, as the Cause of your Infidelity; that it is full as false and absurd, as if *Thieves* and *Adulterers* should say, that their Theft and Adultery was entirely owing to their bodily *Eyes*, which shewed them external Objects, and not to any thing that was *wrong* or *bad* in their Hearts. On the other hand, if you can and will give yourselves up in *Truth* and *Sincerity* to this Spirit of Prayer, I will venture to affirm, that if ye had twice as many evil Spirits in you, as *Mary Magdalen* had, they will all be cast out of you, and ye will be forced with her to weep with Tears of Love at the Feet of the holy Jesus.

But here, my Friends, I stop, that we may return to the Matter we had in hand.

† *Acad. Theophilus*, I beg we may return to that very Point concerning Prayer, where we left off. I think my Heart is entirely devoted to God; and that I desire nothing but to live in such a State of Prayer as may best keep me under the Guidance and Direction of the Holy Spirit. Assist me therefore, my dear Friend, in this important Matter; give me the fullest Directions, that you can; and if you have any *Manual* of Devotion that you prefer, or any Method that you would put me in, pray let me know it.

Russ.

Rast. I beg leave to speak a Word to *Academicus*. I am glad, Sir, to see this Fire of Heaven thus far kindled in your Soul ; but wonder that you should want to know how you are to keep up its Flame, which is like wanting to know, how you are to love and desire that, which you love and desire. Does a blind, or sick, or Lame Man want to know, how he shall wish and desire Sight, Health, and Limbs ? or would he be at a Loss, till some Form of Words taught him how to long for them ? Now you can have no Desire or Prayer for any *Grace*, or Help from God, till you in some Degree as surely feel the *Want* of them, and desire the *Good* of them, as the sick Man feels the Want, and desires the Good of Health. But when this is your Case, you want no more to be told how to pray, than the thirsty Man wants to be told, what he shall ask for. Have you not fully consented to this Truth, that the Heart must pray, and that it prays for nothing but *that*, which it *loves*, *wills* and *wishes* to have ? But can *Love* or *Desire* want *Art*, or *Method*, to teach it to be that which it is ? If from the Bottom of your Heart you have a sincere, warm Love for your most valuable Friend, would you want to buy a Book to tell you what Sentiments you feel in your Heart towards this Friend ; what Comfort, what Joy, what Gratitude, what Trust, what Honour, what Confidence, what Faith, are all alive and stirring in your Heart towards him ? Ask not therefore, *Academicus*, for a Book of Prayers ; but ask your Heart what is within it, what it feels, how it stirs, what it wants, what it would have altered, what it desires ; and then instead of calling upon *Theophilus* for Assistance, stand in the same Form of Petition to God.

For this turning to God according to the inward *Feeling*, *Want*, and *Motion* of your own Heart, in Love, in Trust, in Faith of having from him all that you want and wish to have, this turning thus unto God, whether it be with or without Words, is the best Form of Prayer in the World.—Now no Man can be ignorant of the State of his own Heart, or a Stranger to those Tempers that are alive and stirring in him ; if you know of no Trouble, feel no Burden, want nothing
to.

to be altered or removed, nothing to be increased, or strengthened in you, how can you pray for any thing of this Kind? But if your Heart knows its own Plague, feels its inward Evil, knows what it wants to have removed, will you not let your Distress form the Manner of your Prayer? Or will you pray in a Form of Words, that have no more Agreement with your State, than if a Man walking above ground, should beg every Man he met to pull him out of a deep Pit. For Prayers not formed according to the real State of your Heart, are but like a Prayer to be pulled out of a deep Well, when you are not in it. Hence you may see, how unreasonable it is to make a Mystery of Prayer, or an Art, that needs so much Instruction; since every Man is, and can only be directed by his *inward* State and Condition, when and how, and what he is to pray for, as every Man's outward State shews him what he outwardly wants. And yet it should seem, as if a Prayer-Book was highly necessary, and ought to be the Performance of great Learning and Abilities, since only our learned Men and Scholars make our Prayer-Books.

Acad. I did not imagine, *Rusticus*, that you would have so openly declared against *Manuals* of Devotion, since you can't but know, that not only the most learned, but the most pious Doctors of the Church, consider them as necessary Helps to Devotion.

Rust. If you, *Academicus*, was obliged to go a long Journey on Foot, and yet through a Weakness in your Legs could not set one Foot before another, you would do well to get the best travelling *Crutches* that you could.

But if, with sound and good Legs, you would not stir one Step, till you had got *Crutches* to hop with; surely a Man might shew you the Folly of not walking with your own Legs, without being thought a declared Enemy to *Crutches*, or the Makers of them. Now a *Manual* is not so good an Help, as *Crutches*, and yet you see *Crutches* are only proper, when our Legs cannot do their Office. It is, I say, not so good an Help as *Crutches*, because that which you do with the *Crutches*, is that *very same* Thing, that you should have done with

with your Legs ; you *really* travel ; but when the Heart cannot take one Step in Prayer, and therefore read your Manual, you don't do that *very same* Thing, which your Heart should have done, that is, *really* pray. A fine Manual therefore is not to be considered as a Means of Praying, or as something that puts you in a State of Prayer, as Crutches help you to travel ; but its chief Use as a Book of Prayers to a dead and hardened Heart, that has no Prayer of its own, is to shew it, what a *State* and *Spirit* of Prayer it *wants*, and at what a sad Distance it is from feeling all that Variety of humble, penitent, grateful, fervent, resigned, loving Sentiments, which are described in the Manual, that so, being touched with a View of its own miserable State, it may begin its own Prayer to God for Help. But I have done. *Theophilus* may now answer your earnest Request.

Theoph. Your earnest Desire *Academicus*, to live in the Spirit of Prayer, and be truly governed by it, is a most excellent Desire ; for to be a Man of Prayer is that which the Apostle means by *living in the Spirit, and having our Conversation in Heaven*. It is to have done, not only with the confess'd Vices, but with the allowed Follies and Vanities of this World. To tell such a Soul of the *Innocency* of Levity, that it need not run away from idle Discourse, vain Gaiety, and trifling Mirth, as being the harmless Relief of our heavy Natures, is like telling the *Flame*, that it need not always be ascending upwards. But here you are to observe, that this Spirit of Prayer is not to be taught you by a Book, or brought into you by any *Art* from without ; but must be an inward Birth, that must arise from Christ's *Light* within you, as the Air arises from the Fire and Light of this World.

The *painful* Sense and Feeling of what you are, kindled into a working State of Sensibility by the Light of God within you, is the *Fire* and *Light* from whence your Spirit of Prayer proceeds. In its first Kindling nothing is found or felt, but Pain, Wrath, and Darkness, as is to be seen in the first kindling of every Heat or Fire. And therefore its first Prayer is nothing else but a Sense of Penitence, Self-condemnation,

tion, Confession, and Humility. It feels nothing but its own Misery, and so is all Humility. This Prayer of Humility is met by the divine Love, the Mercifulness of God embraces it; and then its Prayer is chang'd into Hymns, and Songs, and Thinksgivings. When this State of Fervour has done its Work, has melted away all earthly Passions and Affections, and left no Inclination in the Soul, but to delight in God alone, then its Prayer changes again. It is now come so near to God, has found such Union with him, that it does not so much pray as live in God. Its Prayer is not any particular Action, is not the Work of any particular Faculty, not confin'd to Times, or Words, or Place, but is the Work of his whole Being, which continually stands in Fulness of Faith, in Purity of Love, in absolute Resignation, to do, and be, what and how his Beloved pleaseth. This is the last State of the Spirit of Prayer, and is its highest Union with God in this Life. Each of these foregoing States has its Time, its Variety of Workings, its Trials, Temptations, and Purifications, which can only be known by Experience in the Passage through them. The *one only and infallible* Way to go safely through all the Difficulties, Trials, Temptations, Dryness, or Opposition, of our own evil Tempers, is this: 'Tis to expect nothing from ourselves, to trust to nothing in ourselves, but in every thing expect, and depend upon God for Relief. Keep fast Hold of this *Thread*, and then let your Way be what it will, Darkness, Temptation, or the Rebellion of Nature, you will be led through all, to an Union with God: For nothing hurts us in any State, but an Expectation of something in it, and from it, which we should only expect from God. We are looking for our *own* Virtue, our *own* Piety, our *own* Goodness, and so live on and on in our *own* Poverty and Weakness; To-day pleas'd and comforted with the seeming Strength and Firmness of our own pious Tempers, and fancying ourselves to be *somewhat*; To-morrow, fallen into our own *Mire*, we are dejected, but not humbled; we grieve, but it is only the Grief of Pride, at the seeing our Perfection not to be such as we vainly imagin'd. And thus it will be,

be, till the *whole Turn* of our Minds is so chang'd, that we as fully see and know our *Inability* to have any Goodness of *our own*, as to have a Life of our own.

For since nothing is, or can be good in us, but the Life of God manifested in us, how can this be had but from God alone? When we are happily brought to this Conviction, then we have done with all Thought of being our own Builders; the whole Spirit of our Mind is become a mere *Faith*, and *Hope*, and *Trust* in the sole Operation of God's Spirit, looking no more to any other Power, to be form'd in Christ new Creatures, than we look to any other Power for the Resurrection of our Bodies at the last Day. Hence may be seen, that the Trials of every State are its greatest Blessings; they do that for us, which we most of all want to have done, they force us to know our own *Nothingness*, and the *All* of God.

People who have long dwelt in the Fervours of Devotion, in an high Sensibility of divine Affections, practising every Virtue with a kind of Greediness, are frighted, when *Coldness* seizes upon them, when their Hymns give no Transport, and their Hearts, instead of flaming with the Love of every Virtue, seem ready to be overcome by every Vice. But here, keep *fast Hold* of the Thread I mention'd before, and all is well. For this *Coldness* is the divine *Offspring*, or genuine Birth, of the former Fervour; it comes from it as a good Fruit, and brings the Soul nearer to God, than the Fervour did. *The Fervour was good, and did a good Work in the Soul; it overcame the earthly Nature, and made the Soul delight in God, and spiritual Things; but its Delight was too much an *own Delight*, a fancy'd Self-holiness, and occasion'd Rest and Satisfaction in self, which if it had continued uninterrupted, undiscovered, an earthly Self had only been chang'd into a spiritual Self. Therefore I call'd this Coldness, or Loss of Fervour, its divine *Offspring*, because it brings a divine Effect, or more fruitful Progress in the divine Life. For this Coldness overcomes, and delivers us from, spiritual Self, as Fervour overcame

came the earthly Nature. It does the Work that Fervour did, but in an higher Degree, because it gives up more, sacrifices more, and brings forth more Resignation to God, than Fervour did; and therefore it is more in God, and receives more from him. The devout Soul therefore is always safe in every State, if it makes every thing an Occasion either of rising up, or falling down into the Hands of God, and exercising Faith, and Trust, and Resignation to him. Fervour is good, and ought to be lov'd; but Tribulation, Distress, and Coldness, are better, because they give Means and Power of exercising an *higher* Faith, a *purser* Love, and *more perfect* Resignation to God, which are the best State of the Soul. And therefore the pious Soul that sees only God, that means nothing but being his alone, can have no Stop put to its Progress; Light and Darkness equally assist him; in the Light he looks up to God; in the Darkness he lays hold on God, and so they both do him the same Good.

This little Sketch, *Academicus*, of the Nature and Progress of the Spirit of Prayer, may shew you, that a *Manual* is not so great a Matter as you imagin'd.

The best Instruction that I can give you, as helpful, or preparatory to the Spirit of Prayer, is in the Holy Scriptures, wherein are set forth the original Perfection, the miserable Fall, and the glorious Redemption, of Man. It is the true Knowledge of these great Things that can do all for you, which human Instruction can do. These Things must fill you with a Dislike of your present State, drive all earthly Desires out of your Soul, and create an earnest Longing after your first Perfection. For Prayer cannot be taught you by giving you a Book of Prayers, but by awakening in you a true Sense and Knowledge of what you are, and what you should be; that so you may see, and know, and feel, what Things you want, and are to pray for. For a Man does not, cannot pray for any thing, because a fine Petition for it is put into his Hands, but because his *own* Condition is a *Reason* and *Motive* for his asking for it. And therefore it is, that the *Spirit of Prayer*, in the First Part, began with those high and important

important Matters, at the Sight of which the World and all that is in it, shrinks into nothing, and every thing past, present, and to come, awakens in our Hearts a continual Prayer, and longing Desire, after God, Christ, and Eternity.

Acad. I perceive then, *Theophilus*, that you direct me entirely to my *own* Prayer in my private Devotions, and not to the Use of any Book. But surely you don't take this to be right in general, that the common People, who are unlearned, and mostly of low Understandings, should kneel down in private, without any borrow'd Form of Prayer, saying only what comes then into their own Head.

Theoph. It would be very wrong, *Academicus*, to condemn a Manual as such, or to tell any People, learned or unlearned, that they ought not to make any Use of it. This would be quite rash and silly: But it cannot be wrong, or hurtful to any body, to shew, that Prayer is the natural Language of the Heart, and, as such, does not want any Form, or borrowed Words. Now all that has been said of Manuals of Prayers, only amounts to thus much; that they are not necessary, nor the most natural and excellent Way of praying. If they happen to be necessary to any Person, or to be his most excellent Way, let him make use of them; but I would advise him to Examine whether the want of them may not proceed from this Cause, *viz.* because the natural, real Prayer of his Heart is already engaged, loving, wishing, and longing after, the things of this Life; which makes him so insensible of his spiritual Wants, so blind and dead as to the things of God, that he cannot pray for them, but so far as the Words of other People are put into his Mouth. If a Man is blind, and knows it not, he may be told to pray for Sight; if he is sick, and knows nothing of it, he may be told to pray for Health: So if the Soul is in this State, with regard to its spiritual Wants, a Manual may be of good Use to it, not so much by helping it to pray, as by shewing it at what a miserable Distance it is from those Tempers which belong to Prayer.

But

But when a Man has had so much Benefit from the Gospel, as to know his own Misery, his Want of a Redeemer, who he is, and how he is to be found; there every thing seems to be done, both to awaken and direct his Prayer, and make it a true Praying in and by the Spirit. For when the Heart really pants and longs after God, its Prayer is a Praying, as moved and animated by the Spirit of God; it is the Breath or Inspiration of God, stirring, moving, and opening itself in the Heart. For though the earthly Nature, our *old Man*, can oblige or accustom himself to take heavenly Words at certain times into his Mouth; yet this is a certain Truth, that nothing ever did, nor can have the least *Desire* or *Tendency* to ascend to Heaven, but that which came down from Heaven; and therefore nothing in the Heart can pray, aspire, and long after God, but the Spirit of God moving and stirring in it. Every Breath therefore of the true Spirit of Prayer, can be nothing else but the Breath of the Spirit of God, breathing, inspiring, and moving the Heart, in all its Variety of Motions and Affections, towards God. And therefore every time a good Desire stirs in the Heart, a good Prayer goes out of it, that reaches God, as being the Fruit and Work of his Holy Spirit. When any Man, feeling his Corruption, and the Power of Sin in his Soul, looks up to God, with true Earnestness of Faith, and Desire to be delivered from it, whether with Words, or without Words, how can he pray better? What need of any Change of Thoughts, or Words, or any Variety of Expressions, when the one Faith and Desire of his Heart made known to God, and continued in, is not only all, but the most perfect Prayer he can make? Again; suppose the Soul in another State, feeling with Joy its offered Redeemer, and opening its Heart for the full Reception of him; if it stands in this State of Wishing and Longing for the Birth of Christ, how can its Prayer be in an higher Degree of Request? Or if it breaks out frequently in these Words, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, with all thy holy Nature, Spirit, and Tempers into my Soul*, is there any Occasion to
enlarge,

enlarge or alter these Words into another Form of Expression? Can he do better, or pray more, than by continually standing from time to time in this State of wishing to have Christ formed in him? Nay, is it not more likely, that his Heart should be more divided and dissipated by a numerous Change of Expressions, than by keeping united to one Expression that sets forth all that he wants? For it is the Reality, the Steadiness, and Continuity of the Desire, that is the Goodness of Prayer, and its Qualification to receive all that it wants. But this is only meant for private Prayer. In publick Use devoutly, the noble Form prescrib'd in the Prayer Book. Our Lord said to one that came to him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? He answered, *Lord, that I may receive my Sight*: And he received it. Another said, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*: And he was cleansed. Tell me what Learning, or fine Parts, are required to make such Prayers as these? and yet what Wonders of Relief are recorded in Scripture, as given to such short Prayers as these! Or tell me what Blessing of Prayer, or Faith, or Love, may not now be obtained in the same Way, and with as few Words, as then was done? Every Man therefore that has any Feeling of the Weight of his Sin, or any true Desire to be delivered from it by Christ, has Learning and Capacity enough to make his own Prayer. For Praying is not speaking forth eloquently, but simply, the true Desire of the Heart; and the Heart, simple and plain in good Desires, is in the truest State of Preparation for all the Gifts and Graces of God. And this I must tell you, that the most simple Souls, that have accustomed themselves to speak their own Desires and Wants to God, in short, but true, Breathings of their Hearts to him, will soon know more of Prayer, and the Mysteries thereof, than any Persons who have only their Knowledge from Learning, and learned Books.

Acad. You seem to me, *Theophilus*, to have much Truth in what you say, and yet to be in a Way by yourself. I cannot take you to be with those who
place

place *all* in many and long Forms; and now I take you to be even more against those, who make much Account of what they call a *gifted Man*, and make that to be the *true Gift* of Prayer when any one is able to pray *extempore*, or with his own Words, for an Hour or two at a time.

Theoph. I have shewn you, *Academicus*, that Prayer is purely the Desire of the Heart; that it has not the Nature of praying, but so far as it is the true Language of the Heart. I have shewn you the great Benefit that all People must receive from this true Prayer of the Heart. And to remove all Pretence of Want of Ability in the lowest Sort of People to pray from their own Hearts. I have shewn, that the most *simple, short* Petitions, when truly spoken by the Heart have all the Perfection that Prayer can have.

But mark, Sir, why or when I ascribe this Perfection to it. It is when the Heart stands continually in *this State* of wishing to have that, which is expressed in so few Words. It is then, that I said there was no Occasion to *enlarge* or *alter* the Words into another or longer Form, because the *Reality*, and *Steadiness*, and the *Continuity* of the Desire, is the Goodness and Perfection of the Prayer. Now, Sir, let us suppose two Men; the one is frequently an *Hour*, or two, or the whole Night, on his Knees, in silent Prayer, in his Acts of Love, and Faith, and Resignation to God, not outwardly spoken by his Mouth; the other is as long a time pouring forth the Devotion of his Heart in a Variety of fervent Expressions. May not both the Men justly appeal to me, not only as not condemning but as asserting, the Goodness of their *Length* and Manner of Prayer, since I make a short simple Petition to be only *then* a good Prayer, when it proceeds from a *steady, continued* Desire of the Heart? It is not therefore *Silence*, or a *simple* Petition, or a great *Variety* of outward Expressions, that *alters* the Nature of Prayer or makes it to be *good* or *better*, but only and solely the *Reality*, *Steadiness*, and *Continuity* of the Desire; and therefore whether a Man offer this Desire to God in the silent Longing of the Heart, or in simple short Petitions

Petitions, or in a great *Variety* of Words, is of no Consequence; but all of them equally good, when the true and right State of the Heart is with them.

Thus you see, *Academicus*, that I am so far from being, as you said, in a *Way by myself*, that I am with every Man in *every Way*, whose Heart stands right towards God. But if you would know what I would call a true and great *Gift of Prayer*, and what I most of all wish for to myself, it is a *good Heart, that stands continually inclined towards God*.

Acad. I am not sorry, *Theophilus*, that I have made so unreasonable an Observation upon what you said, since it has occasion'd you to give so just an Answer to it. But yet this *silent Prayer* you speak of, is what I never read nor heard any thing of before; and it seems to me but like a *ceasing* to pray; and yet you seem to like it in its Turn, as well as any other Way of praying.

Theoph. All that I have said of Prayer, *Academicus*, has been only to this End; to shew you its true and real Nature; whence it is to arise; where it is to be found; and how you are to begin, and become a true Proficient in it. If, therefore, you was at present to look no farther, than how to put yourself in a State of beginning to practise a Prayer proceeding from your own Heart, and continuing in it, leaving all that you are farther to know of Prayer, to be known in its own Time by Experience, which alone can open any true Knowledge in you; this would be much better for you, than to be asking beforehand about such things as are not your immediate Concern.

Begin to be a Man of Prayer, in this easy, simple, and natural Manner, that has been set before you; and when you are faithful to this Method, you will then need no other Instructor in the Art of Prayer. Your own Heart thus turn'd to God, will want no one to tell it, when it should be *simple* in its Petitions, or *various* in its Expressions, or prostrate itself in *Silence* before God. But this Hastiness of knowing things, before they become our Concern, or belong to us, is common. Thus a Man that has but just entered up-

on the Reformation of his Life, shall want to read or hear a Discourse upon *Perfection*, whether it be absolutely attainable or not; and shall be more eager after what he can hear of this Matter, tho' at such a Distance from himself, than of such things as concern the next Step that he is to take in his own proper State.

You, my Friend, have already rightly taken the *first Step* in a religious Life; you have devoted yourself absolutely to God, to live wholly to his Will, under the Light-and Guidance of his Holy Spirit, intending, seeking nothing in this World, but such a Passage through it, as may tend to the Glory of God, and the Recovery of your own fallen Soul. Your *next Step* is this, 'tis a looking to the Continuance of this first Resolution, and Donation of yourself to God, to see that it be kept alive, that every thing you do may be animated and directed by it, and all the Occurrences of every Day, from Morning to Night, be received by you, as becomes a Spirit that is devoted to God. Now this *second Step* cannot be taken, but purely by Prayer; I don't mean you must frequently read or say a Number of Prayers (tho' this in its Turn may be good and useful to you;) but the Prayer I mean, and which you must practise, if you would take this *second Step* in the spiritual Life, is *Prayer of the Heart*, or a Prayer of your own, proceeding from the State of your Heart, and its own Tendency to God. Of all things therefore look to this Prayer of the Heart; consider it as your infallible Guide to Heaven; turn from every thing that is an Hindrance of it, that quenches or abates its Fervour; love and like nothing but that which is suitable to it; and let every Day begin, go on, and end, in the Spirit of it. Consider yourself as always wrong, as having gone aside, and lost your right Path, when any *Delight*, *Desire*, or *Trouble*, is suffered to live in you, that cannot be made a Part of this Prayer of the Heart to God. For nothing so infallibly shews us the true State of our Heart, as that which gives us either Delight or Trouble; for as our Delight and Trouble is, so is the State

State of our Heart : If therefore you are carry'd away with any Trouble or Delight, that has not an immediate Relation to your Progress in the Divine Life, you may be assured your Heart is not in its right State of Prayer to God . Look at a Man who is devoted to some *one Thing*, or has some one great worldly Matter at Heart, he stands turn'd from every thing that has not some Relation to it ; he has no Joy or Trouble but what arises from it ; he has no Eyes or Ears but to see or hear something about it. All else is a Trifle, but that which some way or other concerns this great Matter. You need not tell him of any Rules or Methods to keep it in his Thoughts ; it goes with him into all Places and Companies ; it has his first Thoughts in the Morning ; and every Day is good or bad, as this great Matter seems to succeed or not. This may shew you how easily, how naturally, how constantly, our Heart will carry on its own State of Prayer, as soon as God is its great Object, or it is wholly given up to him, as its one great Good. This may also shew you, that the Heart cannot enter into a State of the Spirit of Prayer to God, till that which I called the first *Step* in the spiritual Life is taken, which is the taking God for its *All*, or the giving itself up *wholly* to God. But when this Foundation is laid, the Seed of Prayer is sown, and the Heart is in a continual State of Tendency to God ; having no other Delight or Trouble in things of any kind, but as they help or hinder its Union with God. Therefore, *Academicus*, the Way to be a Man of Prayer, and be governed by its Spirit, is not to get a *Book* full of Prayers ; but the best Help you can have from a Book, is to read one full of such Truths, Instructions, and awakening Informations, as force you to see and know *who*, and *what*, and *where*, you are ; that God is your *All* ; and that all is *Misery*, but a Heart and Life devoted to him. This is the best outward Prayer-Book you can have, as it will turn you to an inward Book, and Spirit of Prayer in your Heart, which is a continual Desire of the Heart after God, his Divine Life, and

Holy Spirit. When, for the Sake of this inward Prayer, you retire at any time of the Day, never begin till you know and feel, why and wherefore you are going to pray; and let this *why* and *wherefore* form and direct every thing that comes from you, whether it be in Thought or Word. As you cannot but know your own State, so it must be the easiest thing in the World to look up to God, with such Desires as suit the State you are in; and praying in this Manner, whether it be in one, or more, or no Words, your Prayer will be always sincere, and good, and highly beneficial to you.—Thus praying, you can never pray in vain; but one Month in the Practice of it, will do you more Good, make a greater Change in your Soul, than twenty Years of Prayer only by Books, and Forms of other Peoples making.

No Vice can harbour in you, no Infirmary take any Root, no good Desire can languish, when once your Heart is in this Method of Prayer; never beginning to pray, till you first see how Matters stand with you; asking your Heart what it wants, and having nothing in your Prayers, but what the known State of your Heart puts you upon *demanding, saying, or offering*, unto God. A Quarter of an Hour of this Prayer brings you out of your Closet a new Man; your Heart feels the Good of it; and every Return of such a Prayer, gives new Life and Growth to all your Virtues, with more Certainty, than the Dew refreshes the Herbs of the Field: Whereas, overlooking this true Prayer of your own Heart, and only at certain times taking a Prayer that you find in a Book, you have nothing to wonder at, if you are every Day praying, and yet every Day sinking farther and farther under all your Infirmities. For your Heart is your Life, and your Life can only be altered by that which is the real Working of your Heart. And if your Prayer can no more change you into a good Man, than an Actor upon the Stage, who speaks kingly Language, is thereby made to be a King: Whereas one Thought, or Look, towards God, proceeding from your own Heart, can never be without its proper Fruit, or fail

of

of doing a real Good to your Soul. Again, another great and infallible Benefit of this kind of Prayer is this; it is the only Way to be delivered from the Deceitfulness of our own Hearts.

Our Hearts deceive us, because we leave them to themselves, are absent from them, taken up in outward Things, in outward Rules and Forms of Living and Praying. But this Kind of Praying, which takes all its Thoughts and Words only from the State of our Hearts, makes it impossible for us to be Strangers to ourselves. The Strength of every Sin, the Power of every evil Temper, the most secret Working of our Hearts, the Weakness of any or all our Virtues, is with a Noon-day Clearness forced to be seen, as soon as the Heart is made our Prayer-Book, and we pray for nothing, but according to what we read, and find there.

Acad. O *Theophilus*, you have shewn me, that it is almost as easy and natural a thing to pray, as to *breathe*; and that the best Prayer in the World, is that which the Heart can thus easily send forth from itself, untaught by any thing, but its own Sense of God and itself.

Theoph. There is but one good Prayer that you can possibly make; and that is a Prayer *in* and *from*, or as the Spirit of God *moves* you in it, or to it. This, this alone, is a divine Prayer, no other Prayer has, or can possibly have any Communion with God. For no Man ever did, or can send up, a divine and heavenly Prayer to God, or such a Prayer as can reach God, but *in* and *by* the Spirit of God in him. Our *elementary* Man, and our proud, subtle, serpentine Nature, can read or say a Prayer full of good Words and Wishes, as easily as *Satan* could use Scripture-Language in the Temptation of Christ; but nothing can wish to be like God, or to *unite* with his Goodness and Holiness, but that Spirit in us, which partakes of his Divine Nature.

Acad. I know not, *Theophilus*, how to deny any thing that you have here said: Yet this Account seems to make no Distinction between *our own good* Spirit, and the Holy Spirit of God. I took the In-

spirations and Graces of the Holy Spirit to be something that came into us from *without*, and to be as *distinct* from our own good Spirit, as God is distinct from the Creature.

Theoph. The Holy Spirit of God is as necessary to our divine Life, or the Life of Grace, as the *Air* of this World is necessary to our animal Life; and is as *distinct* from us, and as much *without* us, as the *Air* of this World is *distinct* from, and *without*, the Creatures that live in it. And yet *our own* good Spirit is the *very Spirit* of God moving and stirring in us. No Animal can unite with, or breathe, the Air of this World, till it has first the Air of this World brought forth as the *true Birth* of its own Life in itself; this is its only Capacity to live in the Spirit of this World; and the Breath or Spirit that thus arises in its own Life, is the *very same* Breath that is in outward Nature, in which it lives. It is strictly thus with the Spirit of God in our Souls; it must first have a Birth *within us*, arising from the Life of our Souls, and as such is our only Capacity to have Life, and live in the Spirit of God himself, and is the *very Breath* of the Spirit of God, who is yet as distinct from us, as the Breath of our animal Life, that arises from our own Fire, is distinct from the Air of the World in which it lives. And thus, *Academicus*, our *own good* Spirit is the *very Spirit* of the Deity, and yet not God, but the Spirit of God, breathed or kindled into a creaturely Form; and this good Spirit, divine in its *Origin*, and divine in its *Nature*, is that alone in us, that can reach God, unite with him, co-operate with him, be mov'd and bless'd by him, as our earthly Spirit is by the outward Spirit of this elementary World.

Acad. Indeed, *Theophilus*, you have, in few Words, gone to the Bottom of this Matter, my own good Spirit is the Breath of God in me, and so related to God, as the Breath of my animal Life is related to the *Air* or Spirit of this outward World. It is from God, has the *Nature*, the *Eternity*, the *Spirituality* of God, as the Breath of my Flesh and Blood has the Grossness, the earthly, transitory Nature of the Spirit

rit of this World. And as all my Communication with this World arises from the Breath of this World, kindled in my *own Life*; so all my Possibility of Communication with God, arises solely from the Breath of his Holy Spirit *brought forth* in the Life of my Soul; and I can only live in God by his Spirit having a Birth in me, as I can only live in this World by having its Spirit born in me. This plain Truth sets all the Scripture-Doctrine, concerning the *Necessity, Power, and Operation* of the Holy Spirit, in the greatest and most edifying Degree of Clearness. Thus what can be a more plain, sober, and palpable Truth, than when the Apostle saith, *They only are Sons of God, who are led by the Spirit of God?* It is only like saying, that those Creatures only belong to this World, who live in and by its Spirit. I shall here, Sir, only add, that my Gospel-Faith stands now upon a most solid and comfortable Foundation; my Heart is all Delight and Devotion to God, when I consider, *First*, That Christ my Redeemer is the first *Seed* of the *Woman*, or *Power of Salvation* inspoken into fallen Adam; *the Immanuel; the God within every Man; the Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World.* *Secondly*, That the Holy Spirit of God, the Breath of Eternity, hath also its *Seed* of Life in my Soul; for where the *Word* or *Son* of God is, there is the Spirit of God in the *same State*; if one is only a *Seed* of Life, a Spark of Heaven, the other is so also; and these two, thus considered, are the glorious *Pearl* of Eternity hidden in every Man's Soul, and so often spoken of before. And thus we understand, how the Whole of our Redemption (according to the plain Language of Scripture) is *inwardly* and *outwardly* solely the Work of the Light and Spirit of God, a Kingdom of God both *within* and *without* us, and to which we do not, cannot live, but so far as we are inspir'd, mov'd, and led, by the Spirit of God. Earnestly therefore to pray, humbly to hope, and faithfully to expect, to be *continually* inspir'd and animated by the Holy Spirit of God, has no more of *Vanity, Fanaticism, or enthusiastic Wildness* in it, than to hope and pray to act

in every thing from and by a *good Spirit*. For as sure as the Lip of Truth hath told us, that there is but *One that is good*, so sure is it, that not a *Spark* of Goodness, not a *Breath* of Piety, can be in any Creature, either in Heaven, or on Earth, but by that Divine Spirit which is the *Breath* of God, breathed from himself into the Creature. The Matter is not about Appearances of Goodness, Forms of Virtue, Rules of Religion, or a prudential Piety, suited to Time, and Place, and Character; all these are Degrees of Goodness that our old Man can as easily trade in, as in any other Matters of this World. But so much as we have of an *heavenly* and *divine* Goodness, or of a Goodness that *belongs* to Heaven, and has the Nature of Heaven in it, so much we must have of a *divine Inspiration* in us. For as nothing can fall to the Earth, but because it has the Nature of the Earth in it; so it is a Truth of the utmost Certainty, that nothing can ascend towards Heaven, or have the least Power to unite with it, but that very Spirit which came down from Heaven, and has the Nature of Heaven in it. This Truth therefore, that the Kingdom of God is within us, that its Light is solely the *Lamb* of God, its Spirit solely the Spirit of God, stands upon a Rock, against which all Attempts are in vain. All that I now farther desire to know, is only this; how I may keep free from all Delusions in this Matter, and not take my own natural Abilities, Tempers, and Passions, or the Suggestions of evil Spirits, to be the Working of the Spirit of God in me. Pray, Sir, tell me, how I shall safely know when, and how far, I am led and govern'd by the Spirit of God?

Theoph. You may know this, *Academicus*, just as you know when you are govern'd by the Spirit of Wrath, Envy, Guile, Craft, or Covetousness. Every Man knows this of himself, as easily, and as certainly, as he knows when he is hungry, pleas'd, or displeas'd. Now it is the same thing with regard to the Spirit of God; the Knowledge of it is as perceptible in yourself, and liable to no more Delusion. For the Spirit of God is more distinguishable from all other Spirits

and Tempers, than any of your natural Affections or Tempers are from one another; as I will here plainly shew you.

“ God is unwearied *Patience*, a *Meekness* that cannot be provok'd; he is an ever enduring *Mercifulness*; he is unmix'd *Goodness*, impartial, universal *Love*; his Delight is in the Communication of himself, his own Happiness, to every thing, according to its Capacity. He does every thing that is good, righteous, and lovely, for its own sake, because it is good, righteous, and lovely. He is the *Good* from which nothing but Good cometh, and resisteth all Evil only with Goodness.” This, Sir, is the *Nature* and *Spirit* of God, and here you have your *infallible* Proof, whether you are mov'd and led by the Spirit of God. Here is a Proof that never can fail you; is always at hand; and is liable to no Mistake or Delusion. If it be the earnest Desire and Longing of your Heart, to be *merciful* as he is merciful; to be full of his *unwearied Patience*, to dwell in his *unalterable Meekness*; if you long to be like him in *universal, impartial Love*; if you desire to communicate every Good to every Creature that you are able; if you love and practise every thing that is good, righteous, and lovely, for its *own sake*, because it is good, righteous, and lovely; and resist no Evil, but with *Goodness*; then you have the utmost Certainty, that the Spirit of God liveth, dwelleth, and governeth in you. Now all these Tempers are as knowable to every Man as his own Love and Hatred; and therefore no Man can be deceived as to the Possession of them, but he that chooses to deceive himself. Now if you want any of these Tempers, if the *whole Bent* of your Heart, and Mind is not set upon them, all Pretences to an immediate Inspiration, and *continual* Operation of the Spirit of God in our Soul, are vain and groundless. For the Spirit of God is *that* which I have here described; and where his Spirit dwells and governs, there all these Tempers are brought forth, or springing up, as the certain Fruits of it. What room, therefore, *Academicus*, for so much Uncertainty,

certainly, or Fear of Delusion, in this Matter? Keep but within the Bounds here set you; call nothing a *Proof* of the Spirit or Work of God in your Soul, but *these Tempers*, and the Works which they produce; and then, but not till then, you may safely and infallibly say, with St. John, *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

Acad. Indeed, *Theophilus*, you have given me a short, but very full and satisfactory Answer to my Question. I now perceive, that, as a spiritual Man, or one devoted to the Spirit of God, I am not to look after any *Extraordinaries*, any new Openings, Illuminations, Visions, or Voices, inward or outward, from God, as *Proofs* of the Spirit of God dwelling and working in me; but that all my Proof and Security of being govern'd by the Spirit of God, is to be grounded on other Matters: That the boundless Humility and Resignation of the Holy Jesus; the unwearied Patience, the unalterable Meekness, the impartial, universal Love of God, manifested in my Soul; are its only Proofs, that God is in me of a Truth. Thus far all is right and good.

Would you know the *Sublime*, the *Exalted*, the *Angelic*, in the Christian Life, see what the Son of God saith; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength; and thy Neighbour as thyself.* On these two, saith he, *hang all the Law and the Prophets.* And without these two things, no good Light ever can arise, or enter into your Soul. Take all the Sciences, shine in all the Accomplishments of the letter'd World, they will only lead you from one vain Passion to another; every thing you send out from within you is selfish, vain, and bad; every thing you see or receive from without, will be received with a bad Spirit; till *these two* heavenly Tempers have overcome the *natural Perverseness* of fallen Nature. Till then, nothing *pure* can proceed from within, nor any thing be receiv'd in *Purity* from without.

Think yourself therefore unfit, incapable of judging rightly, or acting virtuously, till these two Tempers

pers have the Government of your Heart. Then every Truth will meet you; no hurtful Error can get Entrance into your Heart; you will neither deceive, nor be deceived; but will have a better Knowledge of all divine Matters, than all the human Learning in the World can help you to.

Would you know what it is to love God with all your Heart and Soul, &c. you need only look back to that which has been said of the *Nature* and *Spirit* of God. For when with all your *Heart* and *Soul* you love, and long to have, that *Nature* and *Spirit*, to be wholly united to it, possess'd and govern'd by it, then you love God with all your Heart and Soul, &c. And then you are first capable of loving yourself and your Neighbour rightly. For so much as you have of the Divine Nature and Spirit in you, just so much Power have you of loving yourself and your Neighbour aright; that is, of loving only and equally that in yourself and your Neighbour, which the Deity *only* and *equally* loves, both in you and him. But it is time to part.—And so, Gentlemen, Adieu.

OF THE
WORTHY PREPARATION
TO THE
Holy Sacrament:

From an Ancient AUTHOR.

IF any Man calls himself a Christian, and comforts himself with the Merits of Christ, and worthily receives the same, let him consider his Ways well, and look to his Heart, and see how it is framed, Whether he is willing to dye wholly to Vanity.

Whether it be his Purpose to go from all Falshood, Unrighteousness, Lying and Deceit.

Whether he desire the Grace of God in Christ sincerely.

Whether he is Sorry for his Sins.

Whether he determines to be Guilty of them no more.

Whether he submits his Will to God's in all Things.

Whether he hath endeavoured to prepare his Heart and Soul for the Reception of the Spirit of Christ, that he may there enter as a living Conqueror over Death and Hell; for Christ hath said, we will come unto you and make our dwelling in you. John ch. 14. ver. 23.

Whether

Whether the Tabernacle of the Holy Ghost be swept and purged by true Repentance.

Whether the Tenour of his Life be so framed, [that Christ may dwell with him: for Christ saith, he that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.

Whether he Love his God and his Neighbour as himself.

Whether he wisheth and desireth to do good to his Enemies.

Whether he accounteth any Thing in this World to be his own, of which he saith this is mine own only; or whether in that which he possesseth he accounteth himself but a Servant of God, and a Steward to him and his Brother therein.

Whether he be careful of his Thoughts and Conversation.

Whether he constantly studieth the sacred Scripture, and imitateth the Life of our blessed Redeemer, as near in his Disposition and Actions as he possibly can.

Whether he have Faith to discern the Lord's Body, for in the Holy Sacrament the Body receiveth the Bread and Wine, and with that the glorified Body of Christ (which will raise ours like unto it) and the Soul receiveth the Sacred Trinity.

Whether he esteem his Life as our Lord Christ did, who was but a Pilgrim in this World, had nothing of his own, and willingly laid down his Life for his Brethren.

Whether he findeth a Sparkle of such a Will in himself: now if he find all this in himself, then he is worthy and very fit for such a testamentary Participation; but if not, and yet findeth a desire in himself that he would become such, then he is in the drawing of the Father to the Grace of Christ; then he should not long parly with Reason and frame Doubts in himself, but should that very Hour enter into such an earnest Purpose that he will, fly, to the Grace of God in Christ, and pray that he will give him such an Heart and Will, and not attribute to himself, as if he could attain it by his own Power and Virtue;

tue ; but meekly come to God as a Child which cannot help himself, and flieth to his Mother to help him. His going to the Communion of Saints should be in Humility, with a true Reconciliation with all those whom he hath wronged, or they him. He should forgive all his Enemies, and with the same Thing for them, that he desireth for himself. He may approach then, not willing to apprehend such Grace by his own Ability, but only with the Fear of God, a penitent Heart, and in a right earnest purpose of Amendment, give himself up and sink into the divine Grace as unworthy, that the Spirit of Grace may be in him, how and as it will, the Heart should say in itself.

OH ! thou great Grace of God, I, unworthy, sinful Man, come to thee upon thy Call as thou hast bidden us, poor Men to come and thou wilt refresh us, be it done unto me according to thy Word, how thou wilt. I give up myself wholly and altogether, do thou with me poor unworthy Man according to thy Grace, I will eternally be thy own ; break my Will, and govern it by thy Will, I can and am able to do nothing, but sink wholly and altogether into thy Grace.

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